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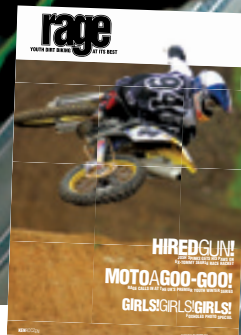
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February

2008

DIRTBIKE  
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# COMMENT

I'M NOT sure if it's human nature or just a stinking attitude peculiar to us Brits but the news that this year's Motocross des Nations will be held at Donington Park – the second time mainland Britain's hosted the biggest race on the global MX calendar in the last three years – hasn't exactly been greeted with the joy, rapture and public displays of nakedness that it deserves.

Internet forums are a great measure of public opinion – everyone has their say whether their opinions are educated and informed or just downright dumbass and, to be fair, it's the bottom-feeders who provide most of the online entertainment. But the debate the decision to switch the MXdN from Moneyglass in Northern Ireland to Donington has kicked off has mystified me.

Sure, last year's British GP wasn't the best. Getting away from the minibike menaces and lack of portapotties, the viewing at Donington was pretty woeful – especially compared to old-school circuits like Foxhill and Hawkstone. But for fecks sake get real! Foxhill and Hawkstone will NEVER, EVER be suitable for an event the size of the MXdN again. The sport has moved on but the infrastructure of these two awesome venues – not to mention the access roads – hasn't. And never will.

The fact of the matter is that Donington Park has the infrastructure and the access roads. What it hasn't got – at the moment – is the track. But what's the easiest to do – widen a few miles of B road to take two semis going in opposite directions and lay some serious hard-standing or erect a grandstand or two and rework a track to give better spectator viewing? It's a total no-brainer.

Don't get me wrong, a GP at Foxhill in its heyday was unbeatable. Despite the uber crappy conditions at the Foxhill des Nats in '98 – and having to spend three nights sleeping in the boot of a Nissan Prairie – it's right up there with my very bestest motocross experiences. But that was before Youthstream raised the bar. Whether they were right to or not, there's no getting away from the fact that they have and no amount of moaning will change this.

Moving swiftly on, off-road sport is hardly a mainstream affair so outside factors that affect major sporting events such as the World Cup and Olympic Games have never touched us before – until now. The news that the Dakar Rally has been cancelled because of the very real threat of a terrorist attack is truly shocking but, sadly, as well as showing just how big the event has become it also reflects the troubled times we live in.

Over on page 21 Jonty Edmunds says that he thinks the event will survive and even thrive as a result of the terrorist threat but I'm afraid I just can't see it. In fact, unless the organisers can find a safe route through to the Senegalese capital it could quite easily be the end of the Dakar Rally as we know it. There's no way ASO can risk the murder of its competitors so unless the political climate alters dramatically we could be looking at the Outback Rally, Mongolian Rally or even the Alaskan Rally in years to come...

Finally this month, it appears that a bunch of bad-ass freestylers (okay, plus one very switched on promoter) have – to borrow one of my dear papa's phrases – sh't a miracle and managed to more or less sell-out a major indoor tour of the UK! And the secret of the Crusty Demons Unleash Hell success? Promotion. Lots and lots of the stuff! We all know that there simply ain't enough MX and SX fans to go around and if you want to, say, fill Wembley Arena for a couple of nights you have to target a mainstream audience and sell events on the back of the entertainment value to Joe Public and his family. Obviously, having plenty of moolah to cover promotional costs helps but ticket sales – not entry fees – should be the way of making these things pay.

And although the Crusty show actually has very little in common with a supercross, its UK success can only be good for the sport. Anything that raises public awareness of men on bikes in a positive way has got to be applauded and the ball's now in the court of SX promoters – and even the team behind the MXdN – to take advantage of the trail blazed by Crusty...

*Sean*



## DAKAR DUSTED!

The world's most famous off-road race stalls at the gate...

Words by Geoff Walker



THE DAKAR Rally is a race that's packed full of danger and the 2008 edition of the world's most famous off-road event is no different – although the biggest danger overshadowing the 30th annual desert blast comes in the form of terrorist threats from the Al Qaeda organisation. In fact, so great is the danger that organisers ASO stop the race from even starting.

Following the regrettable deaths of four French tourists in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania – and also because of a number of threats launched directly against the race and its competitors by terrorist organisations – the 2008 Dakar is over before it begins.

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# DONINGTON DES NATS!

## Two out of three ain't bad as MXdN returns to mainland Britain

**HOT ON** the heels of the shock news that the 2008 Motocross des Nations will not after all be staged at Moneyglass Demesne comes the, er, shock news that Youthstream have settled on Donington Park as the venue for this year's 'World Cup' of MX.

Irish hopes of staging the Red Bull-sponsored event on September 28 went belly up when it was revealed that the Northern Ireland Events Company, which was to have helped fund the race, was in serious financial difficulties. With NI out of the equation rumours of a number of different alternatives began to circulate but few could have guessed that the MXdN would return to the British mainland for the second time in three years.

Donington Park made its debut on the off-road race calendar last year when it staged the British GP. The event received a mixed reception with many upset by the poor spectator viewing but circuit director Robert Fearnall is confident the Leicestershire facility can get it right second time around.

"We are thrilled by the prospects of hosting this terrific event and will be working closely with the motocross rights holders Youthstream to ensure that this is an event that will set the standards by which others are measured," he says. "It was always our intention to host more top motocross events when we had made more evaluation of the projects and now we will be working extremely hard to build a larger fan base for motocross by taking it to our large road racing audiences in putting together exhibition races at both the British Motorcycle Grand Prix and the World Superbike Championship meeting.

"This should take the show to a whole new audience and attract a spectator audience that the event deserves given the quality of the show it provides."

We tracked down Mark Eastwood in Spain to find out what the British MXdN team manager reckons to the news and he was as direct as always. "They've got a lot of work to do there if they want it to be anything like as good as Budds Creek was last year," says Easty. "But it's excellent that we've got the MXdN in England again – although personally I'd rather it was going to Brazil or Australia! Last year we had a real nice holiday, this year we get to go to England – where's the fun in that?"

"Still, it'll be great in front of our home crowd. I can't say it's a great track but Tommy likes it and Billy likes it so if they're in the team it should be good for us."

● As DBR went to press we received confirmation that the date of this year's Irish GP – scheduled to be held at an as yet unnamed venue near **Dublin** – has moved from **June 8 to August 31**.

Scheduled to kick-off in Lisbon on January 5, almost 600 racers plus support crews, medical staff, event organisers and media are mere hours from the big push when the plug is pulled. While prioritising the safety of racers and officials makes ASO's decision the correct one, the cancellation leaves the future of the rally itself and the financial future of many race teams and privateers in the balance as veteran Dakar campaigner Patsy Quick is, erm, speedy to explain.

"I'm devastated for everyone," reckons Patsy. "Not just for the 12 riders here with team Desert Rose but all the people who have put every ounce of energy they have into preparation for this year's

rally. I'm really not sure where this leaves everyone whose life depends on the racing. Who knows? We'll have to see."

Reigning Dakar bike champ Cyril Despres (left) is equally gutted. "To say I'm disappointed is something of an understatement. After months of preparation and planning it's very hard to accept that we won't be going to Dakar. That said I entirely support ASO's decision – they are extremely professional and well informed and if they felt they had no choice but to cancel the event then I'm sure they did so for very good reasons."

"Although it's a huge personal blow for me I am fully aware that for others the situation is much

worse. As a pro racer I will have other opportunities to enter and win races. For the privateers – some of whom have re-mortgaged their houses for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – it's quite simply a disaster.

"It's even worse for the populations of the countries we had planned to visit. ASO has a policy of spending as much money locally as possible and so economically it will be extremely hard for them. Long term the situation is even more serious – Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal all depend heavily on tourism and the cancellation of the Dakar will have a huge impact on this vital sector of their economies."

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turns his world upside  
down as the Crustys  
invade the UK  
(Sutty)  
Contents: James  
Stewart takes second  
at Anaheim 1 in the  
AMA SX series opener  
(Frank Hoppen)**



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Second prize is a training day for two with **Hooper's** heroes (again, bring your own bikes and clobber) plus a case of **Relentless** and the third-placed entry gets two tickets to a **Maxxis British MX Championship** round with hospitality courtesy of **Rob** plus a case of **Relentless**. On top of all that a further **10 runners up** will get – yep, you guessed it – a case of **Relentless**!

And as an added bonus, **DBR** will cover the training day so the top two entrants will get to see their ugly mugs appearing in Britain's favourite dirt bike mag!

To be in with a chance of winning you need to answer the following question (you'll find the answer at [www.ctikneebraces.co.uk](http://www.ctikneebraces.co.uk)) and then stay tuned to our **March** and **April** issues for two further questions.

**Q1:** What is the name of the international orthotics company that produce the **CTi** range of braces?

- A) Ossur
- B) Ossa
- C) SWM
- D) Bultaco

Think you know the answer? Okay, write it down and keep it somewhere super-safe until you've got the answers to questions **#2** and **#3** and then send them all in together along with your name and address and a daytime contact number on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope to us at '**CTi comp**', **DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG**. Alternatively, hook up to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) and follow the competition link. Entries close on **March 31** with the first correct entries drawn totally at random getting the swag.

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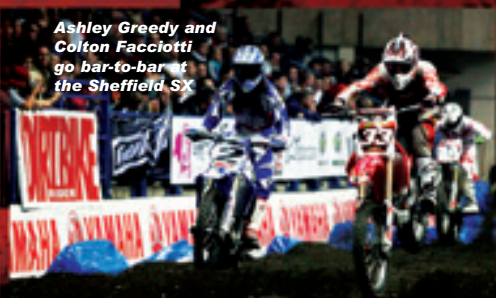
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Ashley Greedy and  
Colton Facciotti  
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the Sheffield SX



After Sheffield  
the action switches  
to Liverpool



## SX GOES O2!

### Future West's Dome date

**THE FINAL** round of the Future West-promoted ACU British SX Championship will now be held at London's awesome O2 Arena – the venue formerly known as the Millennium Dome – not Wembley Arena as originally planned. The date has also switched from March 1 to February 23 to avoid a potentially damaging clash with the Hawkstone International MX.

"It has been a lot of work to move the date and venue but the O2 facility is second to none," says Future West's John Hellam. "I was amazed when I visited the O2 for the first time. The arena is first class with features we have never seen in an arena. The O2 Arena has more seats which is a good thing as the last event we held in London back in '99 at Earls Court was packed to the rafters with 10,000 plus spectators."

Another major boost for Future West is the news that former British MX and SX champ Carl Nunn has agreed terms to race the remainder of the series. Nunny, riding for his new Motovision Suzuki team, joins the championship in time for rounds two and three at the brand new Liverpool Echo Arena on January 25 and 26.

Another former British SX champ – Relentless Suzuki's Lewis Gregory – will also roll up to the startgate in Liverpool after missing round one in Sheffield through injury.

Tickets for Liverpool are available through the Echo Arena box office on 0844 8000 400 or by hooking up to [www.accliverpool.com](http://www.accliverpool.com) and following the supercross link. For O2 Arena tickets the box office number is 0871 984 0002 and for full series information check out [www.fwsx.com](http://www.fwsx.com)

# GORDON CROCKARD

## BOGEYMAN!

**THE OFF-ROAD EXCESSES OF CHRISTMAS IN IRELAND  
HAVE LEFT THE CROCK STAR UNDER THE WEATHER**

**WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD PHOTO BY SUTTY**

**ARRRGHHHH!** THANK goodness Christmas is over and we're all in 2008 in one piece, raring to go, chomping at the bit, keen as mustard, all revved up, let me at 'em, let me at 'em!

Cough, cough, sneeze, snot, swallow, ache, pain! Yeah, the festive period is rough on me – maybe I just need to spend it away from my headcase friends. So I started 2008 feeling super sick but that's not permanent. I hope? Seriously, it happens to me every year – you could almost say it's traditional. I seem to think I'm Superman and agree to every offer I get to go bike riding no matter how wet, windy, cold or ridiculous the day is.

I've a trip to a German supercross in two days time so I'm hammering the vitamin C and garlic like there's no tomorrow. I can't wait to get some traction for a change – I think the last time I had any was in October! Sadly, Ireland's only indoor track has closed down due to poor attendance and the books weren't balancing enough to warrant continuing. So GC gets no sneaky indoor practice but no worries as I'm confident I have the tools to get the job done and run up front. It's over three nights so I'm in for plenty of laps and damn good rewards if I make top results.

Today has been spent running round the phone like a blue-arsed fly. Being 2008 and all that naturally my 2007 licence, insurance and starting permission just ain't going to cut it at signing on so I'm pulling favours left, right and centre to be legal by the time I board the Easy Jet Enterprise on Thursday.

I've been getting some quality time in on my old girl Tessa. Seeing as I'm leaving for the States very soon I thought I'd get as much time in on her as possible. For any minds out there that are in the gutter please realise I'm talking about my trials bike, Montesa! Yep, I've been doing a lot of trials riding recently and have really enjoyed learning new skills to make the impossible become possible. It's a brilliant way to develop a healthy mental attitude and a great way to spend the winter months to advance your throttle and clutch control as well as improving your balance and ability to find grip.

Going by how my Boxing Day trial went for me I should read the rulebook if I want to be successful at trials. Tessa picked up a rear puncture on the second lap and the tyre came off the rim. So I thought 'okay, I'll just borrow somebody's bike to finish the trial' which I did. It was my buddy Watsy's Sherco so, naturally, my switch was spotted – trouble was it wasn't allowed. Excluded!

Other news this month. I turned 29 and one of my mates is in the business of buying concert tickets well in advance and then reselling them closer to the date to anyone

struggling to get a ticket. Well, any time he doesn't get them sold he'll go along himself and as a birthday treat he got me a ticket to see The Verve at The Odyssey. I was thinking 'yeah, I'll go to The Verve, their music's all right – if it was 1997' but it was a good craic and we had a right laugh.

I did a training school down in Cork at Vernon's Mount, the old GP track from the Murphy's Stout Irish Grand Prix in '95 and '96. As I rode round I remembered Kurt Nicoll winning and wheelying up the finish straight one legged. So Kurt started the freestyle craze really – not McGrath with his Nac Nac. The venue and track were awesome and the people are deadly good fun, extremely laidback and don't give a monkey's about anything. This truck pulled in and I noticed it had a '94 reg plate on the front and a completely different '90 reg plate on the back. "Aw to be sure it keeps the cops on the runaround," the owner reckoned!

I also had a day's fun at Rally School Ireland being taught how to master a WRC Subaru. Serious horsepower, serious grip and a fantastic experience. I've become pretty friendly with Ireland's top rally driver Kris Meek and we've done plenty of miles on the enduro and trials bikes together so now I can add the Rally School Ireland to my long-term memories.

Sad news of the MXdN being held at Moneyglass no more wasn't good to hear. Yes the MXdN was due for Northern Ireland but the NI Events Company had an overspend of nearly £2m and have ceased trading. The sport here would have benefited greatly from it going ahead but now it can only be seen as a missed opportunity.

My dad turned 63 yesterday and has to give up smoking so I wish him all the best with that. He's very strong willed so quitting after nearly 50 years will be wee buns to him. I've acquired a '91 CR500 rolling chassis so when I've got a minute – which will probably be when I'm 63 – I'll find an engine for it and make a nice race replica.

Finally, if anyone's looking for a camper to buy I've got just the one for you. Contact me through the DBR office...





# THE THREE AMIGOS!

## Bou leads Montesa 1-2-3 at Sheffield

**SPANISH DOUBLE** world champ Toni Bou dominates the Sheffield International Indoor Trial at the end of December. The factory Mont star stays clean on lap one, then tackles the sections in reverse direction for his second lap and parts with just two marks.

To put his ride into perspective, second-placed Dougie Lampkin – making his final appearance on the HRC Montesa – matches Bou clean for clean on the opening tour but sheds 10 on the much tougher second lap. Third goes to Takahisa Fujinami on 26 to make it an all-Mont podium.

"I am so glad I have been able to close my time at Montesa with a good result," says Dougie. "After eight great years and four world championships it would have been sad to have finished on a low note, especially in front of so many home fans."

Brits James Dabill and Michael Brown come home in fourth and fifth place but former world champ Adam Raga is forced to pull out after a finger injury sustained in a practice crash leaves him unable to hang onto the bars.



## DOUGIE'S DEAL

### Lampkin's back to Beta

**THE REASON** Sheffield is Dougie's last appearance on the Repsol HRC Montesa is because the seven-time outdoor world champ is going back to the marque he made his name on – Beta.

"I am pleased to be reunited with Beta once again," says Dougie, "and I am looking forward to the 2008 season and the challenge that lies ahead."

Dougie's first outing for the Beta factory will be the opening round of the world indoor championship in Marseille on January 18. The Yorkshireman won three world titles for the Italian marque from 1997 to '99.

"It seems strange to be leaving Montesa after such a long and successful relationship," adds Dougie, "but all good things have to come to an end. However I don't want to dwell on that point as instead I would prefer to look forward to the new season."

Toni Bou is the master at Sheffield





## TOUGH STUFF!

All-star entry take on WOR challenge

"WHEN THESE guys go in the front door, Clint Eastwood runs out the back!" When legendary darts commentator Sid Waddell uttered these immortal words he was talking about a couple of fat blokes with mullets – but the same sentence could well be used to describe the entry list for the Tough One Extreme Sprint Scramble.

This year's event – at Nantmawr Quarry on January 26 – features a who's who of extreme enduros with reigning champion David Knight, Hell's Gate winner Wayne Braybrook and four-time world champ Paul Edmondson all signed up to ride. But the wild card entry for the 2008 event is KTM's factory rider Taddy Blazusiak.

The 24-year-old Pole won at last year's Erzberg Rodeo and went on to defeat Knighter – who up to then had been considered unbeatable – at the Las Vegas Endurocross and the Last Man Standing extreme event.

Organising sadists WOR have shaken up the format for this year's event to give spectators even better value for money. The Pro class will still race over two hours but the start time has been brought forward to 3pm so only the last 15-20 minutes will take place in darkness. The course length has also been boiled down so the top boys will lap in about four minutes and instead of a Le Mans start the Pro riders will have to put both front and back wheels into their bikes on the start line.

The Gas Gas-backed speed trials event is back with the entry led by '07 winner Steve Colley. Steve will be battling it out with Braybrook and some of the UK's top trials talent including Graham Jarvis, Shaun Morris, Alexz Wigg and Michael Brown in the 90-minute race that kicks off the day's action at 12.30pm.

More info at [www.worevents.com](http://www.worevents.com)

# STEPHEN SWORD

## FANCY PANTS!

**SWORDY – OR SHOULD THAT BE CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW – TAKES TO THE MEAN STREETS OF EXMOUTH FOR NYE BEFORE IT'S TIME TO KNUCKLE DOWN AND KNOCK OUT THE LAPS**

WORDS BY STEVIE SWORD PHOTO BY JP O'CONNELL

HAPPY NEW Year to everyone and I wish you all the best for '08. With Christmas and New Year out of the way it's back down to work again. I had a good Christmas up in Scotland – very relaxing – and I enjoyed my time there with everyone.

We didn't really get up to much, just the odd bit of a shopping and plenty of chilling out really. I consumed lots of turkey and, of course, some haggis. I always have it when I'm in Scotland but never seem to bother when back at home in England. We took our dogs up with us for the first time ever and the van was fully loaded with presents, clothes and my cycle (DT had given me a Christmas training programme). The dogs loved it up there but my brother Kev was letting off steam about dog hairs on his lovely carpet. It's only because he had to get the Hoover out more than normal!

We had four days up there and then came back on Boxing Day to meet up with Jodie's family. I had a few days of training to keep me busy before the big fancy dress party on New Year's Eve. Jodie and I went down to Exmouth to see in 2008 – Dave and Gail Thorpe invited us out with them along with Ryan (my mechanic who also happens to be DT's son) and some friends. It was a great night and the whole town was in fancy dress. I ended up going as Captain Jack Sparrow so I got into character pretty early on with a few glasses of rum. I had a sore head in the morning – let's just leave it at that!

I rested up on New Year's Day as the next day as I was practising at Essex MX. Ryan met me there in the morning and we had a solid day's work. The track was good – very bumpy which was ideal for building up bike fitness. Next day I went to Cusses Gorse to do some riding and have some pictures taken by JP who I'd got to know through DT. Everything went well and he got some good shots even though the weather was bitterly cold – it wasn't freezing but the wind chill factor was extreme. JP kept having to defrost his hands as he was struggling to press the shutter button. I was warming my hands on the exhaust whenever I stopped.

I've been the guest presenter at a few schoolboy presentations so thanks to all the clubs for inviting me and making me feel so welcome. I had a great time at all of them and wish all the clubs and their members well for this year.

My plans for this month are pretty hectic. I've started riding a lot more in the week but I'm also continuing with the physical training plus we have testing with the new bikes scheduled for later this month in France. I'm really geared up for this year – it's a very exciting time

for me after the last couple of injury-plagued seasons. My motivation has never been as high as it is now! My first race of the season will be an international in February followed by the Hawkstone Park International in March – both will be good warm-up races before the British and world championships start.

Oops! I should have mentioned that before Christmas I was at the Stoneleigh show for a couple of days. Over the weekend I was mainly on the Kawasaki stand which was, kinda handily, opposite the Fox stand. On the Live Stage they had a wheel changing competition and I made the mistake of stopping by the DBR stand which was in front of it. I was getting pressure from all angles to have a go at the wheel changing comp – Geoff Walker was the first to nominate me, then SL, then Jodie. Ryan was also there and he said he'd do it if I did but before I could decide Nik Fisk was calling me up!

My hands started sweating and Walker was giving me plenty of stick and there was a big crowd watching which didn't help. I know it was only a bit of fun but I can't help being competitive – especially because Ryan was up next. I heard the word 'go' and got to work – 30 seconds later it was done and apparently it was the quickest time of the day! So I'd like to say 'better luck next time pal' to a certain someone reading this – you know who you are!

Okay, time to sign off guys and gals! I have to go to the doctor to have my ACU licence form signed so I can get it back in time for the start of the season...







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## Record Breaker!

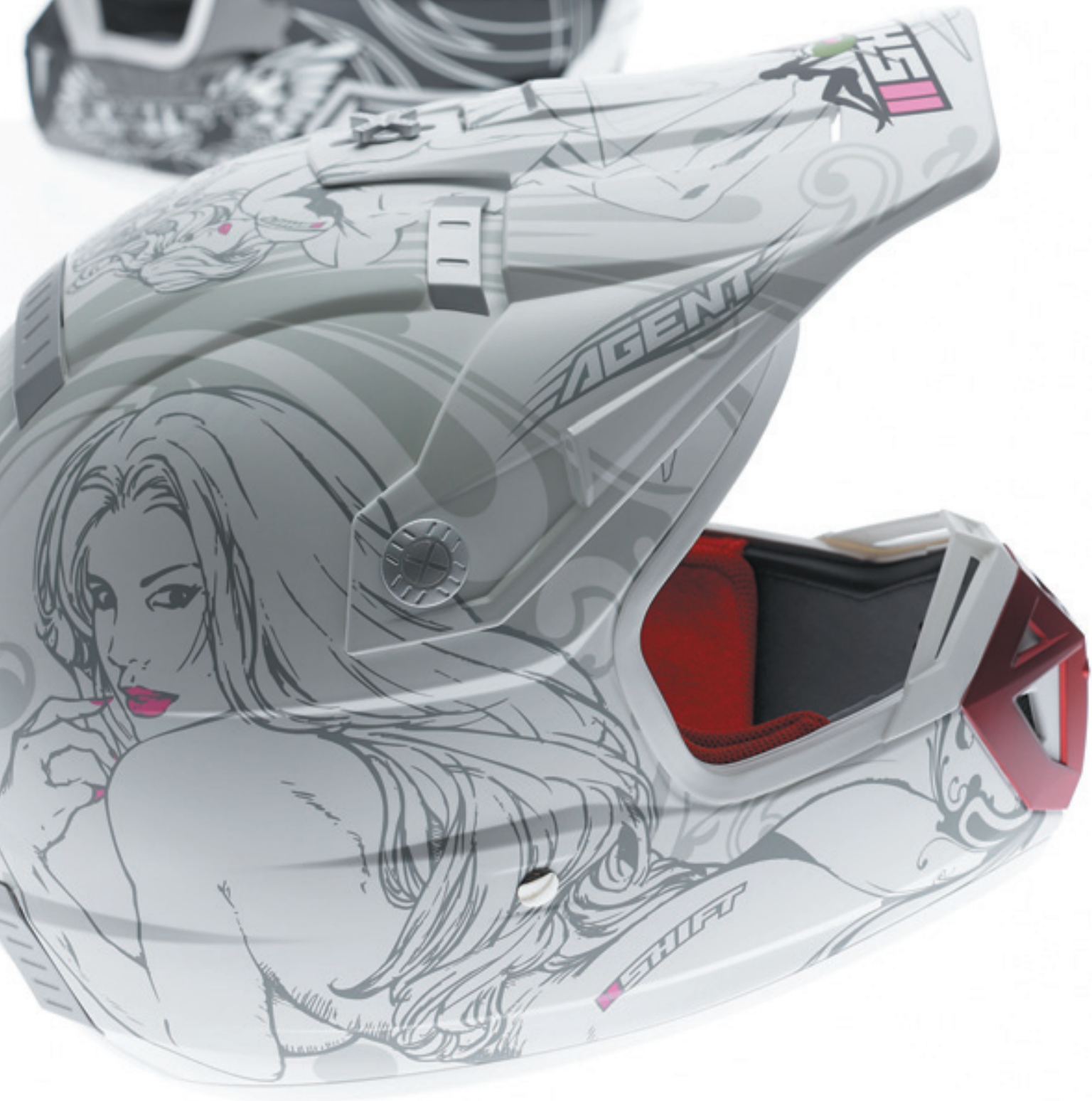
*Dedication, ooooh ooh, dedication, ooooh ooh, dedication is what you need... While most of us were waking up on New Year's Day with king-sized hangovers, Robbie Maddison was waking up with a new long jump world record of 322 feet (and probably a bit of a bad head n'all) after this monumental leap in Las Vegas...*

Photo: Garth Milan/Red Bull Photofiles



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PHOTO: RAY COLLINS



# BLARNEY

WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS PHOTO BY SUTTY

## IT'S A CRAICER!

WITH THE NEW SEASON STRETCHING OUT AHEAD OF HIM,  
OUR MAN IN IRELAND'S PREDICTING A 2008 TO REMEMBER...

**HAPPY NEW** Year to you all! 2008 promises to be a cracking season for a variety of reasons, not least a full-on eight-round Irish championship which will take in eight different tracks stretching from Cork to Desertmartin.

The Irish series will again follow the format chosen by the ACU with MX1 and MX2 classes running on the same day, giving the super-fit guys a chance to ride in four motos if they so desire. From a spectator's point of view we'll get four top quality A+B races while Grade C riders provide support entertainment racing in their respective MX1/MX2 races.

Despite an EGM at the request of disgruntled MX1 C riders, the motion passed at the AGM has been upheld – three Grade A races at the six-round Ulster Premier championship. You can please some of the people some of the time but never all of the people all of the time.

So now that whinging time is over, get your ass into the gym if you want to be in the top 40 Grade C riders who will qualify for the Ulster Grade C series. God forbid, it may just actually work! The bottom line is this – we need to make the Ulster Premier championship regain the appeal of days gone by when we had sponsors in abundance and paying spectators to match.

The first shock of 2008 was my hangover! The second was Phil McCullough's Moto-One squad confirming the rumour that they will be running Suzuki machinery for their Irish and British championship campaigns this year. With over 10 years working with KTM, the sudden move to Suzuki came as a big surprise in Irish motocross circles considering McC's past commitment to the Austrian marque and his team winning all four national championships for the second year in succession.

For sure there is a hint of a Lyons link in this deal. With Adam now related to McC by more than on-track rivalry, he may well have been burning the midnight oil negotiating this TAS/Moto-One deal from behind the scenes.

"I was initially disappointed that KTM did not step up to the mark given the results and the work we as a team put into our racing," comments McC, "but I'm delighted with the package that TAS and Suzuki have put together at such short notice. It shows the confidence and faith they have in us. As yet we have not received delivery of the new 450 but if the 250 is anything to go by the big bike will be a winner straight out of the crate."

If my fading memory serves me correctly (as confirmed by the Turk) was it not TAS bossman Phil Neill who last won the silverware for Suzuki back in 1990? In fact, the now Tarmac supremo won both Irish 125 and 250 titles on a pair of Europrice-sponsored Suzukis – supplied by yours faithfully. Where does the time go?

Rainey Brothers have confirmed that Tommy Merton goes orange for '08. The multi-time Ulster champ reckons the change of machinery will see him climb back onto that elusive top step of the podium this coming season. The word is that Tommy will concentrate on the Open class championships but never say never as the Comber lad is a dab hand on a fast 250F.

Even though GC is in training for his new job Stateside, Marty Barr will not be the only Irish representative in the GP paddock this year. The ever-smiling Dixon Yamaha rider will be keen to build on his well-documented des Nations form and establish himself as a regular top 10 finisher in GPs. It's no secret that Barty would like to race in the USA but to get a deal on a good team he needs to have something to sell to them and that's pretty much his plan for '08.

Joining Martin on the GP trail is the fastest female in British/Irish

motocross. Natalie Kane will fly the flag for Ireland and Motovision Suzuki in her first full women's GP season. Knowing Natalie and her ambition, desire to win and dedication to her chosen profession, I'll not be surprised to see the Irish lass on a GP podium during the year.

Snippets from practice facilities are so often misleading as many riders actually go faster while practising, mainly down to them relaxing and enjoying riding without the pressure of a race situation. Anyway, my spies are reporting that Sean Devlin has been making waves at Desertmartin while GOMX new kid Thomas O' Grady has been practising for his upcoming assault on the MX2 class on a fire-breathing Russell's Motorcycles YZ450F.

Say what you may, Richard Bird came to the fore in 2007 in a big



WAYNE GARRETT WILL BE A  
TOUGH MAN TO BEAT IN 2008

way. No longer just the fast lap man, Ricky proved his championship challenging pedigree and has earned his place in Blarney's 'tips for the top three' in 2008. Actually, I'm starting to get really excited about this season. Last year it was pretty much a two-horse affair – basically the Tommy and Wayne Show – but this will not be the case come mid-season. Experience will hand the early race wins to the Comber lads but by June they will start to feel the pressure, especially in the MX2 class.

While it's unfortunate that the des Nations will now not be held at Moneyglass it's hardly the surprise of the century! Many will see this as a result of moving the GP from its Porter's Pit home, others will point fingers in other directions citing the hoards of people who allegedly sneaked into the GP last year.

The bottom line is that we have a GP date for Ireland TBC and the venue will be in the greater Dublin area which for my money will have at least a better chance of breaking even. People south of the border support international events and they don't have to be die-hard motocross fans to pay to go to a world championship MX, it's more about a day out for the family.

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# JONTY'S BOX

WORDS AND PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

## TERROR THREAT!

**OSAMA AND HIS MATES MAY HAVE FORCED THE CANCELLATION OF THE '08 DAKAR RALLY BUT JONTY RECKONS IT'S JUST ANOTHER HURDLE FOR THE hardcore COMPETITORS TO OVERCOME...**

'DUE TO a direct terrorist threat made against the 2008 Dakar the organisers, in conjunction with the French Government, took the difficult decision yesterday to cancel the event the day before the first Portuguese special stage...'

The above is the depressing opening paragraph of the first and last press release issued on behalf of reigning Dakar Rally motorcycle champion Cyril Despres. What should have been the first of many media releases detailing Despres' sporting adventures as he endeavoured to win yet another Dakar, it instead confirmed that the world's single biggest motorsport event had been cancelled.

The cancellation of this year's Dakar was a sad and disappointing day for many millions of people, not least those who had spent months preparing themselves for what is undisputedly the most demanding of all off-road motorsport events. But the Al-Qaeda-linked murder of four French tourists in Mauritania on December 24 and threats launched directly against the race by terrorist organisations left event organisers ASO with no other decision but to cancel the great sporting event. What a way to start the New Year!

The Dakar Rally isn't as popular in the UK as it is in certain other European countries. It never has been and never will be. And as such it's unlikely that the cancellation of the event will be felt as hard here as it is in, say, Spain or Portugal. Distanced further from the event than our Southern European cousins, what we can't see and touch we don't – generally speaking – share the same enthusiasm for.

The Dakar is a huge event in many ways. Drawing a global TV audience of God-only-knows how many millions, the event is the real Olympics of motorcycling. Attracting colossal investment from many of Europe's biggest car manufacturers, it is one of the few sporting events where the elite and the great unwashed compete side-by-side. It is an event that pushes its competitors to the edge. It is an event that acts as a two-week shop window for off-road motorcycling. While TV coverage of the world motocross, enduro or trials world championships arguably only appeals to those with an already healthy interest in a chosen discipline, the Dakar has mass appeal.

But forget for a minute the fact that the event simply isn't running this year and think about why it isn't running – because of threats launched directly against the race by terrorist organisations. Terrorism was, not so long ago, something that affected motorsport, well, never. Yes, it has affected the Olympics before and remains a thorn in the side of any

Olympic organising committee and yes it has affected those that live in Northern Ireland, New York, Madrid and London but never has it affected such a high profile motorsport event.

So what of the future of the Dakar? Despite this year's event having been halted by the very real threat of terrorism, I for one reckon that the event will continue to go from strength-to-strength. Over the years numerous motorcycle riders have lost their lives but each year the event ignites more and more interest and is rapidly becoming over-subscribed. Over the years competitors have been held at gunpoint while their machinery has been stolen and some have even been unlucky enough to stray off the course only to get themselves blown up by land mines.



**MICK EXTANCE'S DAKAR RALLY ENDED BEFORE IT EVEN BEGAN THANKS TO THE THREAT OF A TERRORIST ATTACK**

The Dakar Rally is all about risk, danger and battling against the unknown – it always has been and always will be. In a strange way the fact that a 'terror threat' may now hang forevermore around the event's neck only adds to the mystical danger. But the long and ever growing list of reasons why not to compete is in part exactly what has intrigued, attracted and continues to attract adventurous motorsport enthusiasts from around the world to compete in the Dakar.

The Dakar is all about overcoming challenges – logistical, mechanical, physical and psychological. Terrorism is just another hurdle that has to be overcome. And the Dakar Rally will overcome that hurdle.



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## LOOPY LOU!

Hi my name is Louise – aka Loopy Lou – a girl racer from South Wales. I started racing MX on my new KXF250 last summer and enjoyed some training days with Justin Morris and Mark Hucklebridge which got me ready to enter the Girls Nationals at Foxholes where I finished ninth overall in the Pro Open class.

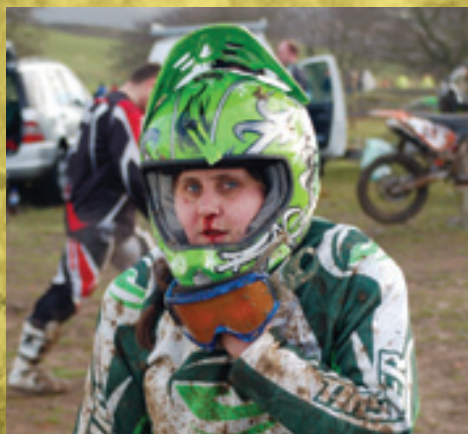
I enjoy racing with my two local clubs – Blackrock and Dredgers – who both run fortnightly meetings consecutively allowing me to ride weekly. Although my Kwacker was new I had a huge list of extras for Santa to bring in time for the new winter championships. Christmas came and so did my new bits – Pro Taper bars, custom small wheels, new graphics, helmet, Alpinestar Tech 3 boots, Alpha Answer kit, ASV levers, White Brothers exhaust and new tyres.

Come the big day I arrived to a very frosty track. While walking it I realised I had never ridden in these conditions before. The ground was rock hard with stones frozen into its surface and after signing on and scrutineering it was time for two practice laps.

I learned a lot in those first two laps. It's easy to go fast down the opening straight, it's a lot harder to take the corners when your tyres can't dig in for grip. The first lap didn't go too bad but the second included my worst fall yet...

I hit a jump and got a kick off the face and landed sideways then hit the floor breaking my new handlebars, radiator, graphics, kit and a much less important bit called my nose! I finished the next two races showing the boys how to eat dirt. It's hard being the only girl in the race but I can't wait for my next meeting.

Louise, Wales



## MISSING IN ACTION

As a religious reader of your great magazine every month I was overjoyed to see an ad that the Crusty Demons were coming to our shores. After conferring with our lass I booked six tickets (not the cheap seats either!) and we took our son and three of his mates for his birthday to the opening show in Manchester.

Where we sat we had a pretty good view and I was asked by one of the boys 'which one is Nate's bike?' 'Not sure' was our answer but as there was a rider profile of the great Nate in our official programme we presumed he would be in the line-up! Not to be though!

Don't get me wrong, the show was awesome – especially the appearance of our own Luke Smith. I just find it disappointing that Nate or other top riders mentioned by yourselves in several issues weren't there! Have you any idea why?

Simo, East Yorkshire

## MISSING IN ACTION 2

First of all may I wish you all a very Happy New Year and above all else a safe 2008!

Having witnessed the much awaited debut show of the Crusty Demons 'Unleash Hell UK Tour' at the Manchester Arena I have to say, regrettably, that I left the show feeling somewhat disappointed! I know that some of you are probably surprised by that statement but let me explain.

Firstly can I say that the show as a whole spectacle was fantastic! The guys that performed on the night put on an out of this world display of freestyle MX and it was great to see some of the top riders in the world throw down their tricks! I personally thought that the man Bamberg was just awesome as was the UK's Luke Smith! But here's the but...

The reason I feel disappointed is simply this. This much awaited debut UK tour of which there has been much hype and publicity has to a certain degree failed to deliver – well it did at Manchester anyway, maybe the rest of the UK will be luckier!

I say this because the tour itself, I feel, was built on the strength of the appearances of some of the top drawer freestylers in the world. Having booked my tickets some three months ago the anticipation of seeing the likes of Nate Adams, Adam Jones and the one and only Jeremy Stenberg was just immense! Add those names to the much hyped Jimmy Blaze and his back-flipping antics on a snowmobile and you are in for one hell of a night! The problem was none of it happened – why?

I'm not taking anything away from the riders that did perform on the night, as I said earlier they were just fantastic and I thank them all for putting on a great show. But the fact that none

of the top three were there to see was just a huge let down. I did manage to grab a few seconds with one of the crew members who told me it was down to injury. Well if this is the case then maybe it would have been a good idea to say something to the thousands of eager fans who were waiting to see these legends of freestyle.

You may feel I am being a little harsh but that is how I feel. The fact is we have waited years for this tour with the promise of these guys and we haven't had the pleasure of seeing them! Maybe they will come back to these shores again, maybe they won't – but if they do let's hope they deliver what they promise!

Berkeley, North Wales

*You've both raised very valid points so we passed on your letters to the rather wild-haired but oh-so foxy Crusty Tour PR agent Caroline Turner who had this to say...*

*"Thanks for the letters and I'm glad you enjoyed the show. We understand your disappointment with not seeing some of the riders but unfortunately we had a bad run of injuries just prior to the UK tour which none of us could have foreseen. Nate Adams was raring to come to the UK but cracked both his heels two days before he was due to fly into the country and a replacement had to be scheduled.*

*"Adam Jones crashed and shattered his shoulder and Mike Mason has had major reconstruction surgery on both his knees so all three were gutted to be sidelined. Unfortunately what the riders do is highly dangerous and all of them have suffered major injuries at some point in their careers which is why the Crusty Demons have a large roster of the world's best freestyle riders – Australia's number one Blake, 'Bilko' Williams was in fact still limping badly having only just recovered from a major injury but rode in all of the UK shows and brought the house down at Wembley Arena, along with Luke Smith.*

*"On to Jimmy Blaze and his incredible back flip on the snowmobile. Unfortunately, we had technical problems with his machine on arrival and replacement parts got held up at customs and did not arrive in time for the Manchester show – he went on to jump successfully at all the other UK dates once his bike was repaired so many apologies that the Manchester fans missed out on this.*

*"The Crustys are planning to come back to the UK following a major European tour which will start in autumn 2008 and we hope to have a clean bill of health when they return. Glad you appreciated the other riders who gave their all for the UK tour."*





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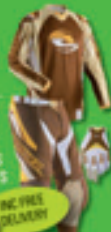
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Price: TBA  
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Words and photos by JONTY EDMUNDS



*Flying four-fiddy!  
Jonty lets rip in the  
woods on Knighter's  
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This film, narrated by Long Way Down star Charley Boorman, explores David's roots, his early success and the road to championship glory. It is packed with interviews with David and his family, plus archive footage and pictures from his personal photo album.

Covering all major events, Iron Man of Enduro also follows David through the entire 2007 Grand National Cross Country season, as he travels to the US in a bid to win the title in his very first year. Enjoy extensive action footage and exclusive interviews as David tries to add yet another title to his name. No.3969 120mins DVD £16.99



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# TECH SPECS



## ENGINE >>

**Modifications:** Factory specification with tuned cylinderhead, titanium valves, lighter valve springs, reduced compression and cylinder length reduced by 8mm over standard

**Bore x stroke:** 72mm x 89mm

**Piston:** Standard

**Exhaust:** FMF Power Bomb with FMF Factory 4.1 silencer

**Carburettor:** Keihin PWK 41mm

**Crankshaft:** Factory specification, lighter, 8mm shorter connecting rod

**Transmission:** MXC six-speed

**Ignition:** Factory specification, retarded

**Spark plug:** NGK BR8CP

**Clutch basket:** Hinson

**Lubricants:** Motorex

**Fuel:** VP racing C12

**Flywheel weight:** Standard

## CHASSIS >>

**Front brake:** Factory Brembo master cylinder with Brembo KTM Hard Equipment SXS caliper

**Rear brake:** Factory Brembo master cylinder with Brembo KTM Hard Equipment SXS caliper

**Triple clamps:** KTM factory to fit 52mm forks

**Bars:** Renthal 996 Twinwall

**Levers:** Standard

**Grips:** SDG

**Handguards:** KTM Hard Equipment

**Fuel tank:** IMS 2.9gal

**Plastics/bodywork:** Standard

**Air filter:** Twin Air

**Radiators:** Standard

**Sumpguard:** KTM Hard Equipment – poly resin skidplate

**Chain:** Regina 520GPZ

**Chainguards:** KTM Hard Equipment

**Sprockets and gearing:** Renthal/KTM

Hard Equipment 13-51

**Rear wheel:** Excel A60 rim with Talon carbon hub

**Front wheel:** Excel A60 rim with Talon carbon hub

**Tyres:** Michelin MS3 19" and Michelin MH3 21"

**Suspension:** Forks – WP MXMA5200,

shock – WP PDS 5018

**Footpegs:** Standard

**Graphics:** Image Werx

**Seat:** SDG

## OTHER >>

Enduro Engineering clutch, rear brake line and rear brake discguard. Motion Pro brake saver. KTM Hard Equipment hour meter. KTM Hard Equipment clutch cover kit. KTM Hard Equipment SXS 4-stroke CNC-machined oil plug. KTM Hard Equipment WP fork protection stickers. KTM Hard Equipment skidplate foam

**B**efore the start of the '07 US Grand National Cross Country series there was an unwritten rule that all top woods racers subscribed to – you needed to be mounted on a 250cc two-stroke if you were to stand any chance of winning the championship. Easier to start, less tiring to ride and more reliable, strokers were the only choice for those serious about winning.

Fast forward to the end of the '07 US GNCC series and the preconceived notion that 'only a two-stroke would do' lay in tatters thanks to the skill, determination and sheer strength of David Knight. Knighter actually started the season on a 250cc two-stroke but it only took him two races to decide to revert to a bike he knew. A bike he enjoyed racing. A bike he had won on before. Even if few others believed it was the right thing to do....

So Knighter made the switch, climbed back onto a four-stroke and despite having to overcome numerous stupid little mechanical problems during the 13-round championship added the coveted US GNCC title to his two WEC crowns.

The bike David reverted to was not a million miles away from the bike he piloted to the '06 E3 world title – a factory-built four-stroke KTM. He

decided to compete on a 450 rather than a 525cc machine but in switching back to a four-stroke he also reverted to settings he knew and a power delivery he didn't need to adjust to.

The motor used in the bike Knighter raced to the '07 US GNCC title is all but the same as the one used by KTM's WEC E2 star Samuli Aro. David's bike features an electric starter like the production machine – something that's removed from Aro's WEC bike – but apart from this the motors are otherwise pretty much identical. The biggest difference is that DK's engine has a different CDI – one that allows the motor to rev a little quicker and gives slightly more torque. Put simply the motor's smooth power is jazzed up a little with an aggressive CDI.

The biggest difference between David's 450cc KTM motor and a production engine of the same capacity is a relatively small one – 8mm to be exact. Featuring a 'tuned' cylinderhead fitted with titanium valves, lighter valve springs, a standard camshaft and with different timing to standard and a bore and stroke of 72mm x 89mm, at the heart of the motor is a con-rod eight millimetres shorter than standard. The second significant difference is a crank that is 600 grams lighter than a stock part.



>>

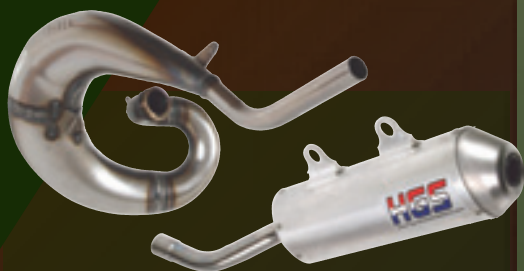


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Just like many of KTM's factory prepped 'off-road' four-stroke motors, the one David used during last year's US GNCC series featured less compression than standard. Fitted with a 41mm carb as opposed to a 39mm part, the bike's ignition is retarded slightly and then fitted with an FMF exhaust system.

With many of KTM's factory riders preferring to use a six-speed motocross gearbox, Knight opted for the six-speed MXC unit which is basically a mixture of enduro and motocross gears. Each of the gears is slightly different to those in a standard EXC enduro gearbox with first, second and third being a little longer, fourth about the same and fifth and sixth a little shorter.

Despite KTM's engine builders being able to save 5.6kg by removing the electric start system, its battery and all the required knobs and switches, David prefers – as he did with his WEC bikes – to retain the electric starter system. The bike does however have a shorter primary gear which helps make the engine smoother under acceleration.

The aim of the mods is to produce a motor that is responsive, builds quick yet manageable power and has handling that's improved over standard. While engine modifications are rarely known to improve a bike's handling, by shortening the con-rod the cylinder also has to

*Once out of the woods and into the cornfield, the tractable power is evident*







be shortened which lowers the numerous moving parts found within the cylinderhead. Although less than one centimetre lower than on a standard bike, the difference according to KTM's engine builders is a noticeable one and one well worth the effort.

David has an immense amount of skill on a bike – although the sceptic Septics seem to think of him as brute-strength rider who muscles his way onto the podium. Truth is DK rides with finesse. Trials trained and speed driven, the big guy can weave through trees and pop over rocks at ridiculous velocities without so much as denting a rim.

What you get when you kick DK's bike over is a buttery smooth delivery of ground-grabbing power. The motor has low compression and starts easily with the foot or the button. Standard KTM hydraulic clutch goodness keeps the easy sensation at the hands and a clean, crisp throttle response gives you that oh-so-good feeling when you whack the carb slide up. When you get to the trails it gets even better.

It doesn't take long to learn what the monster living inside the KTM cases craves. The motor loves to be ridden responsibly, with power that comes on quick and strong but totally under control. It has a great torque feel – smooth and linear through the mid-range with a top-end surge that comes on just before you'd expect to

shift. The whole bike is comfortable running a higher gear and just motoring around, not revving. This type of power produces great traction on flat, fast corners and can have you ripping out of deep ruts with enough snap to get the front up. Same goes with track obstacles. If you need to loft the front the bike will do it. But it rarely spooks you with an unpredictable, over-aggressive hit.

Coming out of the woods and into the daylight of the fast and flat cornfield sections, the bike shows that it seemingly wants to win as much as David does. With a top-end surge there if you need it, the motor almost always delivers great traction. It's a free-revving motor that takes its time reaching high revs. It rarely spins up quickly unless you really drop the hammer. Really, this bike is happiest with a short shift and a lot of mid-range throttle.

David Knight is both taller and heavier than most other riders and as such you'd expect his suspension to be firm, if not hard. Initially the fork action is stiff but the factory 52mm tubes settle into the mid-stroke like a dream and are close to being the best feeling off-road or motocross forks I've ever felt. The movement and control was phenomenal and gave a confidence rating that's off the scale. The shock was stiffer but if I settled back and loaded it up it performed happily. The rear worked best for me

at high speed where I could scoot back with my weight but even in the tight stuff and up steep climbs it rarely knocked me out of line.

Most of David's bike is simple and clean. The handguards aren't 'bark busters' as David doesn't, well, bust bark. Fitted with simple plastic handguards, David opts to not over-protect his hands as he doesn't want to 'get lazy' and start clipping trees. The reason? He feels full wrap-around guards might stop him manoeuvring as precisely as he does now which would reduce his speed.

Control set-up is fairly normal on Knight's bike. The clutch is level with the bar which is probably a little higher than the average rider would have theirs but his front brake is fairly neutral – down a bit from level. Speaking of brakes, the factory Brembo calipers are supreme giving the same bite as stock KTM units but with a much healthier control and more linear grab. The Renthal Twinwall bar bend is nice, neutral and comfortable and not too tall.

Having ridden David's KTM at the final round of the '07 GNCC series I learned a lot about the champion's bike. More than anything I learned the bike would work every bit as hard as you ask it. But I also learned that provided you're as talented as Knighter you can win a US GNCC championship on a four-stroke, no matter what anyone else says.



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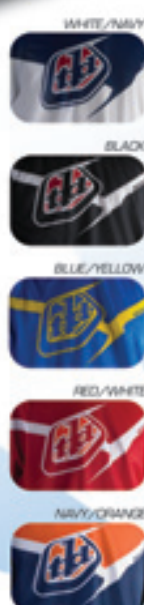
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Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttu







# BRITISH LION

LUKE SMITH >>

*Sole Brit on the Unleash Hell tour is 25-year-old Luke Smith who hails from Brighton but has been living on the other side of the world for the last five years.*

*"It's definitely pulling me along riding with the best guys in the world," reckons Luke who despite his slick style is one of the Crusty rookies. "You can't look up to them anymore when you're trying to compete against them. I live in New Zealand now and they came and did a show four years ago and I was a fill-in rider for that. They were so happy with the way I rode they asked me to join the Australian tour and I impressed them on that and now I'm on the world tour.*

*"I've only been flipping for probably a month now and I've just started doing 75-foot flips. I do a few no-foot nacs and stuff like that and I've been working on super flips and cordova flips into the foam pit at home but I haven't taken them to dirt yet.*

*"I've flipped at a couple of shows at home but never in front of so many people – it's going to be pretty hairy but I've got to step up to the plate. London's going to be like my home event. My nan – she's 82 – is coming to that so I'm pumped on that and some family and friends will also be there."*



**B**lazing pyrotechnics, banging music, gyrating babes, a sword-swallowing freak plus a giant talking skull – ladies and gentlemen, the Crusty Demons have landed! And there's even some blokes on bikes n'all!

This is showbiz with a capital S – a carefully scripted, meticulously rehearsed production that at face value is just about as far from the original Crusty freeride ethos as it's possible to get. In fact, when we roll up at Manchester's MEN Arena there's even a dress rehearsal in full swing – just how un-Crusty is that?

But when I collar the legendary Jim 'Bubba' Chiasson backstage he's quick to set me straight. "It's still all about a bunch of friends hanging out and having fun," reckons the longest-serving Crusty member on the 2008 Unleash Hell tour. And who am I to argue, especially because the boys really are hanging out and having fun – just to get to Bubba I have to dodge a squadron of RC helicopters piloted by the Crusty's Apocalypse Now re-enactment society!

And you know something? The rehearsals and carefully scripted show make for a super-polished performance that, combined with some rabble-rousing MCing by Steve 'Lurch' Scott and Gary Reid, gets the near

sell-out audience on their feet and screaming for more. I've been to most of the British SX races over the last decade or so and – barring Warren Edwards' last-corner take-out move on Mark Hucklebridge at Exeter back in Y2K to land the UKSX title – I've never seen a crowd so revved up.

High points of the evening for me are a side-by-side flip from the same ramp as the Commonwealth team – cheered on by hyper Shane Warne-lookalike Reid – crush the Yanks and, later in the two-and-a-half hour show, a 10-bike back-flip train.

The big question is can the Crusty Demons emulate in the UK the astonishing success they enjoy in Australasia and America? All the early signs are good. After the Manchester date the tour moved down to London's Wembley Arena where a second night had been hastily added when the opening show sold out, followed by a stop at Birmingham's NIA before the tour signed off with a two-night stand at Belfast's Odyssey Arena after the original single-nighter sold out.

To shift that number of tickets promoters Rush Sports launched a promotional campaign that included ads in mainstream newspapers and back-flip demos by Tower Bridge and Old Trafford. And anything that puts men on bikes in front of a fresh new audience has got to be a good thing...



Beau Bamburg gets flatter than  
Paris Hilton — for all the flippin'  
you can't beat a whippin'

CRUSTY DEMONS

## THE BOSS

MIKE PORRA >>>

Steve Mini flips out

The UK struggles to support a SX series that draws sell-out crowds so why would Crusty target us for a major tour? We sat down with promoter Mike Porra to find out the reasoning behind what — on paper at least — looks to be a big financial gamble.

"It's really exciting for us to come to the UK because we consider this to be really virgin territory," reckons Mike. "In the western world it's probably the most under-developed freestyle motocross territory so we've had to work pretty hard to sell tickets to the show. We're pretty pleased with the result and hopefully if everything goes well we can really start to build a following."

"The reason we chose here first out of Europe — we've got a really big tour planned to Europe next year doing 60 cities — is mainly because it's English-speaking. We wanted to go to a proper, big country first that's English-speaking and put on the best possible shows with our American and Australian commentators who know the shows so well and have everybody come in and see it — we've got promoters from 20 countries coming to London on Saturday night who hopefully, barring injuries, will see the show at its very best and then we can move on from there."

"It's not an easy market to go to in terms of tickets sales up front. Tonight's not sold out but it's done pretty well and I think we'll end up at about eight or nine thousand and we didn't go cheap on the ticket prices either. I think in London we're pretty hopefully we'll end up across the two shows — we've sold one show out although it's a smaller venue — getting to about 10-12,000 tickets so that's a pretty fair result for our first go."

"The majority of people in this country don't even know what the Crusty Demons even is so we're selling to people who don't know what motocross, supercross or freestyle is and that's how it is in other countries that we go to. It started off with a core audience who had dirt bikes and were into supercross and freestyle and now in countries like the US and Australia and New Zealand the kind of crowds we get to these shows — we just had a tour of Australia and if you pick Melbourne as just one city we sold out the Rod Laver Arena three times which is 15,000 a night — the vast majority have nothing to do with motocross or supercross. They're basically just people who want to be entertained."

Now they've got the Crusty Demons firmly established in Australia, Rush Sports are moving into supercross in a big way and are confident they can inject some marketing magic — plus some pretty radical ideas — into indoor racing.

"We've done a 10-year deal with Motorcycle Australia and we've launched a new company and a new brand called Super X. Chad Reed's my partner on it and it's basically a whole new series called the Australasian Supercross Series and we hope to take it through Asia eventually."

"Basically the whole positioning of the thing is from the producers of the Crusty Demons comes an all-new supercross championship with all-new formats, new venues, new everything so we're really going to shake this thing up and make it a great entertainment package both for television and also for the live events."

"Chad's been fantastic and he's right behind all the crazy ideas we're coming up with — ideas that have never been done anywhere in the world before — but it's still a proper championship series. The governing body, the teams, the manufacturers all had to be kind of dragged kicking and screaming to the finish line but now everyone's right behind it and really excited about what we can do with these races."





**Bilko's a sterling stand-in for the injured Nate Adams**

**Don't try this at home!**

# STAR TURN

BLAKE WILLIAMS >>

With Nate Adams out of action with two busted heels, star billing shifts to 22-year-old Blake 'Bilko' Williams who himself is making a comeback after six months on the sidelines.

"I haven't ridden for six months and have had about two weeks on the bike getting ready about two months after a knee reconstruction. It's about one-third of the time I need to recover to get over it plus my ankle and leg and all the toes that I broke. I was supposed to be ready by November last year but I got an infection and that set back my knee reconstruction – everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

"The foot's a fairly complex thing and I broke so much in there – I shattered two bones, broke all my toes and dislocated it all – that it's still not right and it's probably going to be another year before it's back to normal working condition. When I've got my boot on it doesn't move around at all and as long as I don't land too hard it's good but if I have a big over-jump I have to put all my weight on my good leg.

"I'm pretty much travelling with the Crusty tour the whole time and then head to America to do the contests. With this it's a lot more relaxed [than competitions] – you go when you feel comfortable and there's a little less pressure. You do have to do stuff wheel-to-wheel with other people and flip side-by-side but that's all fun because you do the same thing week-in, week-out so you get used to it but with contests it's different courses, different jumps and you put a lot of pressure on yourself."







**Cameron Sinclair shows his best side – that's a no-handed flip suicide**

**Kain Saul gives minibike fans something to scream about with this superman flip**



## CRUSTY LEGEND

HUBBA BUBBA >>

**DBR:** So how are you enjoying Merrye Olde England?

**Bubba:** "We just got here a few days ago and it's been wonderful. I'm pretty excited – we've got a great show for these people and I'm stoked to bring the same show we've been doing in Australia and New Zealand over to the UK. It's going to be good."

**DBR:** You've been part of Crusty since the get-go – you must have seen some pretty major changes...

**Bubba:** "Yeah, I've been with Crusty for 14 years man. Changes? Well I tell you what, we all slow down a little bit as we get older and the kids are getting younger. Everyone's friends and when we're not on tour we all hang out together at home so it makes it like a family atmosphere and the riders all stick together and they ride well together."

**DBR:** When it all kicked off did you ever imagine just how big it would become?

**Bubba:** "When we first started out I'd never have imagined we'd end up touring the world. I'm one of the original members of the first ever freestyle motocross show and where it's gone since then is unbelievable."

**DBR:** Now it's turned into such a big deal do you think it's gone away from the original spirit of freestyle?

**Bubba:** "No. It's still all about a bunch of friends hanging out and having fun. Me and a couple other of the older guys have been doing this show for seven or eight years now and what you see is not a contest – they're out there having fun and they're actually riding better because of it. They're looser so you see a better show. And it's all choreographed which is a good thing because they pretty much step up with one another."





# PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY!

**Dave Thorpe's famous for his heroics on a half-litre Honda but Jack's favourite shot of the legend-in-waiting features DT dwarfing a bike with only half the cubes...**

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**SQUIRE SUTTON'S** stunning October cover shot of Dave Thorpe winning the Senior class at Donington Park's British MX GP brought to mind my own favourite 'DT' snaps.

One I especially cherish dates back beyond his world title-winning heyday to a fast and fearful hillside circuit in Czechoslovakia. The picture unusually features Thorpey in dashing action on a 250. Remember he could cut the mustard on smaller strokers and had been national 250 champion for Kawasaki in 1982.

It was September 1983 when Povazska Bystrica hosted the Trophee des Nations, a week after a dramatic MX des in Belgium. Sometimes it's hard to portray in cold print just how much effort has gone into a motocross racer's performance. In a team event that problem is quadrupled. And that Czech weekend perfectly illustrates this conundrum.

The MX des was fought round a terrific track almost inside the town of Angreau close to the French border where Great Britain were represented by Thorpe (Honda), Jem Whatley (Suzuki) and Yamaha duo Dave Watson and Roger Harvey. The Belgians fielded a mighty full-strength squad featuring Andre Malherbe and

Andre Vromans on Hondas and Suzuki world champions Georges Jobe and Eric Geboers against Americans David Bailey (Honda) and maiden voyagers Jeff Ward (Kawasaki), Mark Barnett (Suzuki) and Broc Glover (Yamaha).

The USA eventually got the better of the host nation in a raw, rain-soaked contest with Great Britain a quite brilliant third so we all headed off to Czechoslovakia in optimistic fine fettle. Even high-spirited renegade Jem Whatley, reigning 250 national champ, was resigning himself to the disciplines of collective competition. "Team talks, team talks, that's all we seem to do," he smirked after being ticked off by assistant manager Vic Allan for omitting to walk the track with his team-mates on Friday night!

Disaster then threatened after a calamitous first qualifying race on Saturday afternoon. Both Watson and Whatley crashed drastically downfield and up loomed the ignominious spectre of Maggiora in 1980 when we last missed the cut and rode the B races come Sunday!

But Thorpe and Harvey rose magnificently to the occasion. Roger, old rogue that he was even then, knew Vromans had picked up a knee injury in Angreau. So having gated second





THORPE HEADS ANDRE  
MALLERBE DOWN  
AMAZING CZECH HILL

behind the Belgian up the first long, sheer hill 'Harv' plunged back down towards a banked left-hand turn in the deep valley bottom. "I was trying to remember which leg Vromans had hurt," admitted a gleeful Midlander later. "So I just ran him hard into the bales and he lifted his left leg and backed off!"

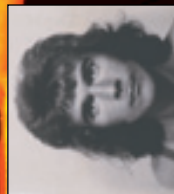
For four glorious laps Britain's 125 national champion led a breakaway quartet featuring Vromans, Jobe, Thorpey and Kees van der Ven. Qualification cracklingly assured, we could all breathe again!

I was sharing space in the seedy splendour of the 'Hotel FIM' with Dave Thorpe, who during his debut season with Honda had claimed his first British Open title. That evening I returned to our room to find the big man sobbing uncontrollably after receiving distressing news from home of his pregnant wife Sharon who had been rushed into hospital.

David was devastated. Having failed to console him, I rushed off to seek help from Vic Allan. Only recently retired from racing, the 38-year-old Scot was a particularly close friend of Thorpe's and was eventually able to calm his 20-year-old former training partner. David courageously decided to stay and compete for the team though was understandably subdued on race day. The four-man MX and Trophée des format featured two 45-minute motos, both contested by all four riders. Eight teams of 32 men lined up for the first race but this vast, imposing circuit – rising precipitously into the woods and boasting magnificent permanent whitewashed buildings – only had sufficient room for 30 riders on the grid. Each team had to nominate one guy to start from row two and Harvey insisted on being the unlucky Brit...

It didn't work out! The short, sharp start straight swept left up a colossal vertical climb and invited mayhem. "Boys were going everywhere," reported Roger. "I'd hoped to blast up the inside. Then Vromans went down in front of me and I was lost. They were all dead ones I was passing after that!"

Watson also got jammed up in the wake of Vromans' fall as Thorpe stormed the ramparts in 12th place with Whatley a fabulous fifth. Suzuki's grand prix rookie had won his first world championship moto in Switzerland and ridden all year with 'Jem Who?' wittily inscribed on his pants. Finally finding the correct combination of tyres for the fast, hard-packed track, he forced



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he



Thorpe  
Trophée des  
Czechoslovakie



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## JEM WHATLEY BEATS 125 WORLD CHAMPION ERIC GEBOERS IN FIRST MOTO

thrillingly through the dust and lay fourth right behind Glover, Jobe and Barnett with two laps to go.

"I should have got Barnett," rued 20-year-old Jeremy. "But I pushed too hard and spun off and as I remounted Malherbe buzzed past." A stirring performance nonetheless, backed up by Thorpe's resolute ninth spot.

It was during this resourceful ride that I captured my photograph of the big Berkshireman — perfectly panned on my favourite Kodachrome 64 film — dwarfing his 250cc Honda as he braked hard off a scything downhill ledge into a rutted, adverse-cambered left-hander past the packed Czech crowd. Povazska Brystica was one of those camera-friendly circuits where the crowd were massed round the outside and we sun-scorched snappers could run around in loads of space on the infield. Mint!

In race two it was Whatley's turn to suffer a first-turn crash with his mate Arno Drechsel. "Arno hit someone first and we went down like dominoes," reckoned Jem. "Then I was pumped, gassed it too hard too soon and wore out!"

Repassed by Drechsel, Whatley faded to 14th as the tall German powered impressively through to sixth. Watson was a sound seventh at half-distance. "I'd got a magic start, Jack, then the throttle began to stick." He was meddling with the cable as he entered that same awkward, rough off-camber turn and fell. The Ulsterman remounted, finally finishing 19th behind Thorpe and Harvey who passed the two Daves in the closing stages. "There was a lot of effort but I



## HARVEY (28) + WATSON (26) SANDWICH AMERICAN JEFF WARD

was riding badly," muttered Thorpe.

Great Britain's brave boys were nevertheless only just edged out of fourth place in a tiebreaker with the consistent Swedes while the USA once more bested the Belgians for overall victory, despite 125 world champ Eric Geboers' elated maiden race win on a 250 Suzuki.

It was bound to look bad on paper but mere results masked the enormous spirit of the

enterprise. The riders, charming team manager Albert Carter and his incessantly brewing wife Pat, the back-up crew and mechanics Vic Allan, Steve Goodyear, Chris Scriven and Keith Thorpe — everyone had contributed hugely to a pair of memorable weekends.

And best of all, Mrs Thorpe would subsequently present David with a bouncing, healthy baby boy called Lewis!







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Gautier Paulin with  
mentor Jacky Vimond



# HOT SHOTS!

ONE'S THE FIM'S ROOKIE OF THE YEAR WITH A FACTORY KTM CONTRACT, THE OTHER'S A FORMER WORLD BMX CHAMP WHO'S SIGNED FOR MOLSON KAWASAKI – BETWEEN THEM JEREMY VAN HOREBEEK AND GAUTIER PAULIN ARE LEADING THE NEXT WAVE OF TEENAGE TALENT COMING UP FROM THE CONTINENT...

Words and photos by **ALEX HODGKINSON**

Jeremy Van Horebeek  
shares the MXdN  
podium with Ken De  
Dycker, Steve Ramon  
and Joel Smets





profile

Paulin's BMX jumping skills came in useful at the Bercy SX.



In 2006 Jerre wasn't even racing GPs – in 2007 he was representing Belgium at the MXdN



**H**e's the 2007 Rookie of the Year and he's already committed to KTM on a long-term deal. Jeremy Van Horebeek is Belgium's next star.

Belgium, for all its success over the decades, has struggled to develop talent in the smaller class in its own backyard. For many years youth racing was outlawed and even today the MX2 national title is very low key.

With the exception of Eric Geboers and Stefan Everts – who were always both exceptional in every way – Belgian success in the 125 class usually came with stars like Gaston Rahier, Harry Everts and Patrick Caps stepping back down a class and even Steve Ramon always cut a big-bike style during his years on the Kawasaki and KTM. Belgium's MX2 man at the Nations has traditionally been a compromise of a big bike man on damage limitation but the key to their podium finish

at Budds Creek in September was Jeremy Van Horebeek – a youngster who wasn't even riding GPs the year before.

"The Nations was something else – 12 months before I was racing the European championship and at Budds Creek I was on the podium with Carmichael, Villopoto, Ramon, De Dycker! I shall never forget that.

"It wasn't an easy race. It wasn't mid-summer anymore but it was hot and the bike set-up was completely different. Then the engine broke in the first race and I was really angry with myself. It wasn't just for me, it was for the team, for Belgium. If we didn't get five scores anything Steve or Ken did was all for nothing. I was still worked up when I went to the line for the second race and made a really bad start but I fought through to 10th so I did my part.

"The whole team was in America for one week before the race and that was awesome. You know, one

year before they were all my heroes – Steve, Ken, Joel – but we had a lot of fun together. Even as a GP rider I didn't have any real contact to them but now we are like friends, colleagues. Joel is the funniest guy in the world, he can laugh about everything. And I don't have to look up to him just as a great world champion anymore – he is a real friend now."

The 18-year-old – "I passed my driving test and had a provisional licence at 17 but I wasn't allowed to drive alone until my birthday at the end of November. My dad is a tiler working on the roofs but he hasn't worked full-time the last couple of years because he had to drive with me everywhere when I went training" – is a lad of many talents. "I come from Eigembrackel. It's about 20km south of Brussels. We speak both Flemish and French there and I grew up speaking both fluently."

He also has a clear head and displays a maturity beyond his years. Bercy has struggled for years to



**Van Horebeek in action at Donington**



**Van Horebeek has a bright future...**

**Paulin was flying in Ireland**



**Paulin squeezes out compatriot Seb Pourcel at Bercy**



**I**t is surprising how few BMX stars have made the transfer to motocross but, as the most successful SXer of all time said farewell to the sport this winter, a potential successor stepped into the limelight.

But can Molson's new signing Gautier Paulin follow in the footsteps of Jeremy McGrath?

"I raced BMX for six years before I switched to motocross and I was world champion in 1999 when it was held in France. I was still very young when I rode BMX but I don't think there are the same opportunities to become a professional as in motocross," explains the 17-year-old from Draguignan, a small town in the hills above the Cote d'Azur.

Not that the lure of fat cheques was the incentive to swap the pedals for a motor. "From a very young age I

was a great fan of motocross and supercross and never missed it on TV. There was a track close to my home and I kept asking for a bike until my dad finally bought me an 85cc Yamaha."

That was when Gautier was 12 but there followed a mix of delight and frustration during his years in the Miniverte. "I won my very first race. It was just a small local race but I went directly to the French championship and finished second. Then I moved to the 125cc class with Yamaha but I broke my shoulder and three vertebrae at the first race."

And but for a twist of fate the '07 European MX2 champion might have remained just one of the great undiscovered talents that are out there waiting to be found.

"I was just out riding at the track close to my house one day and Antoine Meo, who lives about an hour from me, came out to ride and saw me. When Antoine got badly hurt soon after that, Paolo Martin needed a new rider for MX2 and Antoine introduced me. I went to test the bike and we got on well straight away. It was very good experience, very good material and it is a good team. Bercy '06 was my first race with Team Martin, also my first race on a four-stroke."

But the Italian race team boss was not the only introduction which the unfortunate Meo made for Gautier. He also hooked him up with Jacky Vimond. France's first world champion, the man who started the Gallic surge to the forefront of world motocross with his 250 world title back in 1986, has been the driving force



attract the cream of young talent from beyond their national frontier but Jeremy didn't need asking twice when the invitation came. "I'm not a supercross expert but I jumped at the opportunity to race in Bercy. You need to learn to ride aggressively nowadays. One of the things I was missing this year at the GPs was that I was just too slow in the early laps. I need to build so that I can be aggressive from the word go, to find my rhythm in the first three laps. After that I have been at my level but I have been giving the other guys a head start too often."

"And racing against the top guys in any aspect of the sport can only be useful. I went to Bercy to learn. I watched them and tried to do what they could do. I will become a better rider for it. I am young, I am not yet at the top but you are always learning in this sport anyway."

'Jerre' – "That's just the usual shortened form of

Jeremy in Belgium but my fans reckon I ride a little crazy sometimes, just like Jerry the crazy mouse being chased by Tom" – has come up the hard way.

"I started racing when I was eight but until I turned 15 I raced the youth class at the amateur races in Belgium. As I got better and went to the big federation I started to find a few sponsors but essentially I was still riding as a complete privateer with my dad and my mom supporting me when I rode a Honda in some races of the European championship in 2005."

But the forward-thinking Van Horebeeks had already prepared their son for the multitude of different tracks youngsters face when they venture outside their homeland.

"From the age of 12 we would also go to France quite often. In Belgium we have so much sand but in France they have tracks with big jumps and that was a steep learning curve. I rode the French youth

championship against Pourcel and Musquin. They were still a little faster than me but I was in the top group and learnt a lot in those years from 12 to 14. That would have been very difficult in Belgium, you just don't have the opportunity to race so many different types of track. We have some hard tracks but they are usually old-fashioned tracks with no big jumps. Racing in France helped me a lot with my technique.

"In '05 I did really good in the circumstances. I couldn't do all of the series – too many races were too far away – but I did some good races and for 2006 I rode for Vangani. Tinus helped me a lot. That was my first real sponsorship and took a lot of weight off my parents financially.

"For 2007 I signed a five-year deal with KTM and they placed me with the Champ junior team of Kees Van der Ven. I will race Champ again in '08 and if I make good progress maybe I can move to >>

Van Horebeek jumped at the chance to race Bercy



Van Horebeek leads Terreblanche, Raffray and Swanepoel

behind the careers of many a French teenager – most notably Sebastien Tortelli – and the decision to work together was a mutual desire.

"Jacky helps me with everything – physical training, riding the bike, technique. For sure BMX was a good preparation for motocross. It helped my reflexes and was also good for the technique on jumps but I was still missing a lot. I was not so fast in the corners but now I have worked hard with Jacky and it is much better."

Vimond knows talent when he sees it. "I didn't meet Gautier until August last year. Antoine Meo introduced us and Gautier came to my course with five riders. But he made so much progress already in those couple of days. His response is so good. Sometimes I tell him to try something and he goes straight out there and does

it better than I could ever have imagined. Amazing!"

And the sharp learning curve paid off within 12 months as Gautier pulled back an early points deficit to clinch the European crown at the final round. "I think I already had good speed at the start of the year but I made very bad starts in the first race at Castelnau de Levis. The first moto I also broke the rear brake and that is not a track to race without brakes with big drop-offs and steep hills. I kept going and finished 20th. That was a really good ride in the circumstances but the result doesn't show it. The second moto I started last again and got through to seventh. Then at Cingoli a couple of weeks later I was already winning by 18 seconds after gating fifth. After that race I knew I could win the title."

And he also made giant strides during his introduction to the GPs. "Of course I was only able to race GPs when there was a break in the schedule of the European championship but I was happy with my progress. I qualified at the first attempt in Mantova and then at Teutschenthal got my first points with a 12th."

But it was in his late summer return from Faenza onwards that Gautier started to turn heads. "I gated about 10th in the first race there and moved forward to seventh but then I made a big crash and landed on my shoulder. I was black and blue. I started third in race two but my shoulder was so painful. Every time I hit a bump I was in agony and I had to drop back but it was a good experience. I couldn't ride for a week after that but in Loket I was already top 10 with a ninth. >>





Prime White Red



Prime White Blue



Prime White Fuchsia



Prime White Grey



Steve Ramon  
2x MX World Champion

# MX7

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the factory team in '09. I hope so anyway. I guess I was the first recruit in the KTM junior programme which started officially last summer."

Jeremy ended fifth in that full European season with Vangani with podiums on the vastly different surfaces of Mladina in Croatia (the place where Robbie Herring took his debut GP win in 1987) and the deep Dutch sand of Markelo confirming that those trips to France as a kid had paid dividends.

And for '07 he moved up to the GPs! "I finished fifth in the European in 2006 and most of the top stayed there for another year. Only Verbruggen, Frossard and me moved up to the GPs but I am sure it was the right decision. I am so happy I didn't stay there. Like next year Joel Roelants will be my team-mate but in '06 he ranked higher than me. Now I have the experience of one year in the GPs and have moved ahead of him.

"Joel will get the same treatment and opportunity as

me but I have been there once, for him it will be all new. It's good to be European champion if it is possible but you mustn't stay there too long and the only one which really counts is the world title."

Points at the '07 GP opener were not a surprise – sand almost makes a present of a scoreline to any Benelux youngster worth his place at the gate – but Jeremy broke top 10 a fortnight later in Spain, a rare good start helping his cause immensely in the single groove grind of race one. Points kept rolling in but Jerre identifies Bulgaria as the race where his season took off.

"I was getting better gradually as the year went on but I think Sevlievo was the point of the season where I really started to progress. I was only 19th and 13th there but I had such a great feeling that weekend. My physical fitness was okay – I work on that with Jaimy Scevenels – and I felt really confident. The only thing

which was missing were the starts and two weeks later in Sweden it happened.

"I rode for nearly 25 minutes in third place. The pressure got me towards the end but I still finished fifth. That was the key which opened the lock. You know, you are riding quick when you are running 20th or 25th in a GP but nobody notices you there and you don't get the feeling of adrenalin like when you are racing up front. Confidence is so much in this sport. When I am racing I keep pushing myself, telling myself I can do it but when you are racing down the field it doesn't want to come out."

The rest is history with fourth at Namur and top 10s through the final four GPs of the season.

Despite his tender years Jeremy realises the importance of surrounding himself with the right people and he's quick to commend members of his support network.

>>



Paulin was running third at Namur until his gearbox broke



Not many riders led Cairoli in '07

"Then at Namur I was running third until the gearbox broke. It was just one of those things but until that happened I thought it was even possible for me to make the podium."

A fortnight later in Northern Ireland the teenager astounded onlookers as he surged through the pack from 20th to fourth! Gautier has firm beliefs why he has progressed. "I was already pretty fast at the start of the year but the progress I have made was down to Jacky, the team and me. We made a big step together but it was the result of hard work.

"I left school when I went to Martin Honda so that I commit myself to work full-time. Before I could only ride once, maximum two times a week. I love motocross and supercross – it is my life – but now it is also my work."

Gautier is quick to express a debt of gratitude to Martin Honda. "It was a very enjoyable year for me in Italy. There was a good feeling in the team, just like a family – and of course it was a big opportunity for me. Everyone works very closely. Paolo as the boss, the race mechanic and the specialists for the suspension and the engine. Everybody played their part in our success.

"But now I am going to Molson! I didn't go for the money. I know what everybody said but Martin Honda offered me the same money. And I also had to leave friends behind. It was a tough decision but the only consideration I had to take were the material and the opportunities for the future.

"Both teams have much motivation and both work

so hard but the Kawasaki is such a good bike – the engine, the suspension – and they even flew me to Japan for testing already. And Jacky comes with me. I really wanted Jacky to be with me, that was important. And it is not just the material, also for the language. I want to go to the USA eventually and I think it is important to improve my English. I cannot do that in Italy, I needed to be working for an English team.

"The first contact I had was with Lisa Church but Steve Guttridge soon became involved too. I had many proposals after I started getting results and at first I had thought it was sure that I would stay with Honda Martin but after I had been to England for talks with Kawasaki I knew that this was the option for me.

"I have a two-year contract but I want to stay

>>





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"Jaimy and my mom and dad are always telling me I can do it, always supporting me and helping my confidence. That is so important. My dad is a big help. So many dads push their sons so hard and of course my dad wants me to be successful but he stands back and lets me do my own thing. If he sees something on the track he will tell me but he leaves it to me to take it or leave it. We have a good relationship!"

Jerre is also aware of the careful, patient assistance he has received from Kees Van der Ven and Harry Nolte at Champ. "When I came to them at the start of the year I was riding with my handlebars further forward. I know now that was not the best for me but Kees and Harry have so much experience working with youngsters and saw it. But they didn't make me pull the

bars back all at once – they changed the position millimetre for millimetre, convincing me each time it was a little better. If they'd tried to make me change in one jump I guess they knew I would probably react just like any kid would. They knew how to work me towards it.

"In the end we moved the bars one centimetre back and now it feels much better. But just as important as changing the set-up was the way they did it. Kees admitted it to me afterwards he knew I would put up a wall if they tried to make me change too quickly. And what more can I ask for than to have my bikes prepared immaculately every week by Harry. He has been building championship-winning bikes for more than 20 years. Having someone like Harry build your bike also makes a difference."

The relationship continues in 2008 so what is possible? "I hope I can finish on the podium several times this summer. I ended up 16th in the standings and got Rookie of the Year but I hope I can be top 10, maybe even better. I am committed long-term to KTM but both the factory and myself will take it one step at a time how my career progresses. Too many things can happen in this sport to make a plan year-on-year and I want to stay with both feet on the ground."

"What needs to happen will happen if I do that and produce the results. I have time enough. I know I am good but I don't need to go around telling everyone I am the best. I want to stay cool and let my results take me to the top!"

## JACKY VIMOND

SEB'S MENTOR ON PAULIN...

"What can I say about Gautier? He's a really nice personality but how do I explain it to you? Perhaps the best way is to tell you how we are working together. It is very similar to the way I worked with Sebastien Tortelli. They are different personalities, different mentalities but they react the same way and Gautier is the first youngster I have worked with since Sebastien who is like that."

"Everything is going in the right direction. They both wanted me to help them and there is 100 per cent confidence in each other. We can talk through any problems – they both want it straight, no corners, everything out in the open between us."

"It is too early to say whether Gautier has the potential to be even better than Sebastien but his work ethic is tremendous. If I told him to get up at five in the morning to go for a run he would do it. He wants to win, he is not afraid of hard work and he is prepared to work in every way he needs to achieve his aim. He is always pushing the limits in the search for perfection."

"The big thing he brings from BMX are the legs. Top BMX riders play with the legs so well, using them so effectively to control the bike."

And his style is so flowing. Sometimes even I think he is not looking so good but when I take the lap time or the segment time he is so fast – there are times when even I am having to look hard to see where he is saving the time."

"The one place where he was really struggling and where he still has to improve is corner speed. His background in BMX means that he is not used to using the engine power to the maximum in the turns. Jumps are no problem – his technique is fabulous – and his corner speed is also improving all the time."



Bonding with Team Belgium's De Dycker and Ramon at the MXdN

longer with Kawasaki. I want to race GPs for two more years in MX2. The second year of the contract is open but for me I want to ride two years MX2. I want to win the world championship and after that I want to go to America but I am not setting myself a definite plan. So much can happen and I will take it one year at a time."

Gautier will be based in Belgium, close to the team's race HQ. "I lived this year at Jacky's place in Italy but I will now be based in Belgium at Jacky's house there."



But UK fans will get several chances to see him in action during the coming season. "I don't know what licence I will ride on yet. I rode for Monaco last year but perhaps I will take out a French licence for 2008. But I will not race a complete national championship. I may decide myself where I want to race but I expect I will race the first two rounds of the British championship as a wildcard and then some rounds of the French championship."

And Gautier has already tasted the rewards of

being a global player when he went to Japan in October for the testing and the final round of the Japanese championship.

"Sugo was nice. I was already racing the '08 bike with a factory engine and made good starts in both motos. The Japanese riders are not so fast but they know their own tracks and it was a good experience for me. I was in Japan for nine days, I had a good feeling and the Kawasaki people were so motivated. It confirmed to me that I had made the right decision!"

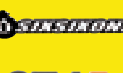


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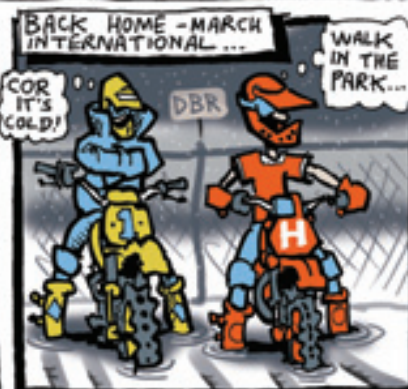
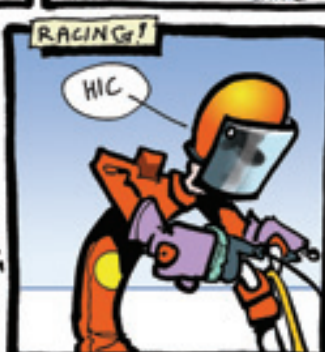


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# BALANCING ACT

## BRAWN AND BRAIN >>>

In case you missed the point, we're talking about physical training here. And preparation. Add a third 'p' to that – planning. As Coppins has said, it's not just about the burn.

"For me it's more about controlling what you do. To race motocross in the first place you need to have balls – be a bit rip, s\*\*\* and bust. But you can't take that attitude to training, like 'I'm going running' – 30 minutes, flat-out and home. That's no way to train, you really need a better system and to mix up your training with longer, easier training sessions and then harder more intense ones.

"You don't have to hurt every time you train or come home totally dead – then have a day off and do it all again. But you can't trick yourself and take it easy every time either. You've got to have the hard days too. And then on the days when you're struggling for motivation and the weather's bad I think it helps to train in a group and be a little bit open-minded so if it's pouring with rain when you planned to cycle switch to a run instead. But be prepared and organised to make the switch."



Ben Townley and Josh trained together despite being rivals



PEAK PRACTICE!

"To race motocross in the first place you need to have balls – be a bit rip, sh\*t and bust – but you can't take that attitude to training..."

**Y**ou see it every season. Five or six meetings into a championship a rider who burned so brightly in the opening races starts to slow down. His riding becomes inconsistent, sometimes to the point even where he crashes and gets injured. When the journals ask him what's happened he'll tell them how he probably over-trained during the winter and hit his form too early. Everyone will nod sagely. By year-end the rider will reflect on a season blighted by injury. Or one cursed by matters out of his control.

Josh Coppins says this is all nonsense. In terms even the slowest witted rider in the paddock could understand – total b\*\*\*\*\*s.

Coppins has been described as the only rider in the 2007 MX1 paddock to be in what has come to be called the 'third phase' of his career. Whether this phases theory of rider careers holds any water can be debated but essentially what the paddock's acknowledging is that Coppins has attained the knowledge, the skills, the speed and the consistency to post podium finishes weekend after weekend – the means to gaining world championship glory. The problem with the phases theory is that it almost mystifies the process by which a rider becomes effective. The truth, according to Coppins, is that effectiveness comes through two factors combined – strength and intelligence.

"I think at the end of 2004 I started getting the formula right – working

towards stepping up. I changed things a lot and it's basically progressed and improved from there. The preparation for the last three seasons has been pretty much the same.

"Well, let me explain this a little better than that. I was training here in Belgium with Yves Demeulemeester who also trained Joel Smets, BT and a whole heap of us. And Paul Cooper's trainer, Stefan Neusser, came along and said that he was doing a fitness test on motocross riders and asked if I wanted to take part, together with Ben Townley. At the time I thought 'oh s\*\*\* man we've got to drive to Germany – I'm pretty fit and I don't think I need this'. But then Ben said 'if you go I'll go' so away we went.

"And the results were really interesting and I realised that for the first time someone can tell me 'you need to be fitter in this area' and I went away from the test not just knowing that I was fit but I knew exactly where I was fit and more importantly where I wasn't so I knew where I needed to improve.

"I actually found that I could train at a high heart rate quite easily but I didn't have a very good base level fitness so I needed to do more slow, long training sessions in order to improve. I came away from there really impressed and that was when I decided it was time to move on, to work with Stefan. I needed a new direction."





"Back when we had Stefan Everts racing I could hang with him until the 30-minute mark but then he'd tear me down in the last bit"

Checking lung capacity  
with Stefan Neusser



Kiwi claret tests ensure  
Josh's training is bang on



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Coppins nonetheless reserves full respect for Yves. Having trained the likes of Smets, Tanel Leok, Ben Townley, Tyla Rattray, Marnicq Bervoets and many more, Coppins knows that Demeulemeester's techniques get results. "What I learned most from Yves was the work ethic, without that you're stumped – and he can really motivate you. You can go there tired and he can make you feel like a million dollars."

With Neusser, Coppins applied science to his training. Most of us are familiar now with the VO2 max test – which is effectively the measuring tool when it comes to fitness. What Coppins was doing, together with Neusser, was carefully analysing the data and using it to find better performance. And they were doing the test not just the once but continually.

"The first test I did was about four or five years ago and since then I consider I've done a 180 degree turn in my overall condition. At first I could go straight to a high heart rate of around 180bpm and hold it there for ages. Yet the reality was my endurance was poor. So we worked harder on the endurance training. To the point where now we have to try harder on the explosive high heart rate stuff because I've trained my endurance so well. And that's why it's important to do follow up tests – at least three per year so I can monitor my training and see the results on paper.

"In the past, sure I was fit. I was explosive and I could go flat-out. And I could do that in the pre-season races and the first three, four or five GPs but then I started to just tail off and deliver a few of those sixth places. The reality was I was tired so I'd take a couple of weeks off and start again. But by the time you build back up your condition it's too late and you're not going to win the world championship."

Coppins is of the view that 'base training' is the most important – and the most widely overlooked – aspect of the job. It's the lack of consolidated base training that brings on fade, misinterpreted as 'peaking too early'.

"I train intensively with Neusser – he pretty much trains with me, even in New Zealand. The best way I can explain the base training we do is this – it's when we bank away all our hours. And not many riders do that. A lot of riders will start training in January or February and start riding a bit more and so and then they'll be fit for the first GP which is fine. But they can't hold that level. And I used to be one of those guys. So I started to put in more hours during the off-season because I found in 2004 especially and towards the end of 2005 that I was exhausted at the end of the year.

"Remember too that I was also racing the British championship in those years and I'd have weekends when I'd have seventh, sixth and fifth places and they weren't good enough to be world champion. I needed to be at worse on the podium every weekend. So I had to work out how to go to that next level. I just wasn't ready to do all those weekends of racing. I was tired mentally as well as physically and I was struggling to keep that level because I wasn't recovering.

"So with Stefan I worked out that the base levels training helped me to hold a higher level for a longer period. You still have your highs and lows – for instance, this year my low was Sweden where I was fifth overall but every other GP I was on the podium until my injury. In Italy [the race after Sweden] I felt good and at the Czech GP [the race after Italy] I was running third when my brake locked up and was fourth in the second race when I crashed. I think I could have held my level for the remainder of the season.

"So I work seriously hard in November, December and January. By doing that come February I'm ready for the first GP. And you continue to feel good and strong, you can feel the improvements week after week. But you can't feel like that without the base fitness, that's why from November up to the first GP is so important. Once the GPs start you travel to the race on a Friday, you qualify on Saturday, race Sunday, travel back on a Monday. Tuesday you're tired. Wednesday and Thursday

you do a little bit of training, then pack and Friday you're gone – on your way to the next GP. So you've got only two days to train, which is barely enough.

"And I know top riders winning GPs in MX1 that are not doing anything during the week because they're so tired after a GP and need to recover. They might win a GP but there's no way they can win more than a couple because they can't maintain their fitness without the correct intensity in winter training."

Having sorted his training regime Coppins has gone a step further – sorting his riding. He's quite open in admitting he's not the most talented rider in the paddock. And he's quite open too to working on improving that situation, admitting his weaknesses. By doing so, of course, he turns his weakness into a strength.

"I'm not one of these guys who just burst onto the scene you know. I'm no Pourcel, BT or Rattray – I've been chipping away at it for years. And I don't have the best style out there unlike someone like Steve Ramon. But I've got a lot of heart, guts and determination and I want to do better and I want to win – and win a world championship. So, like with the training, I looked at the areas where I could be improved. My physical shape is now pretty good, the bike's pretty good and my team's pretty good but probably the biggest thing I could do to improve my results was to look at my riding.

"I figured I needed to try to use a little less energy and stop fighting with the bike. Back when we had Stefan Everts racing I could hang with him until the 30-minute mark but then he'd tear me down in the last bit. I'd seen Jacky Vimond working with Seb Tortelli in '98 and I always thought 'gee that guy's good'. I liked the way he was. If you remember, Tortelli's results around that time were up and down but Jacky was always smiling and happy and I liked that because even when the chips were down he stayed positive. And that's the kind of guy you need on your side.

"So at the end of 2005 and into '06 I started working with Jacky and he helped me with my style and technique and also helped me to save some energy and it seemed to work really well. I thought I had a pretty good shot at the championship in 2006. I'd challenged Stefan quite a few times in 2005 and I think he went five GPs in a row without winning. I finished second in the '05 championship within 40 points of Stefan."

Altogether it means Coppins is putting together the whole package. Making himself the complete racer. Obviously you can't rule out acts of god – the entire motocross world agree that Coppins was entirely the innocent victim in the accident that robbed him of the '07 championship. But come 2008 Coppins will again be the ultimate racer – stronger, fitter and as composed as he can be. It's enough of an advantage to psychologically defeat even competitors he feels may be his superior.

"Yeah, there's a couple of guys in MX1 making the same mistakes year-in, year-out. But it must have been the same for Stefan when he was watching me for all those years. And those guys I'm referring to are awesome riders and on their day can whip my ass – but not over a whole season. And some of them will never work out their mistakes.

"But we all make mistakes. And every now and then there's a young rider that comes along who learns from those mistakes bloody fast and they're also fast – like a Townley for example. He sucked information from me and Stefan and good on him – he's smart and look where he is now. World titles, US titles and so on.

"But I'm not cocky about this. You know, you're only as good as your last race. And you get to the point in your career when you're older and wiser and you're wondering how long will that wisdom keep you at the top before age takes its toll on your physical performance. Especially compared to the younger guy with that 'I don't give a s\*\*t attitude'.

"Stefan got out at the right time because he knew that his wisdom alone wasn't going to keep him at the top for too much longer. I know more about this sport today than I've ever known, I'm the more complete racer than I've ever been. But none of us last for ever."





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Gail Thorpe cooks up a storm in the kitchen

JP feels the strain – much to the amusement of Swordy

# PT WITH DT!

WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING FIGHTING FIT FOR A NEW SEASON, FOUR-TIME WORLD CHAMP DAVE THORPE IS THE HOT TICKET FOR CAUSING PAIN AND SUFFERING...

Words and photos by JP O'CONNELL

**E**njoying the benefits and glory of being a pro motocrosser requires the ultimate in sacrifice and dedication – the race season is just one part of a much bigger picture. But have you ever wondered what a pro does throughout the off-season? How hard can it be?

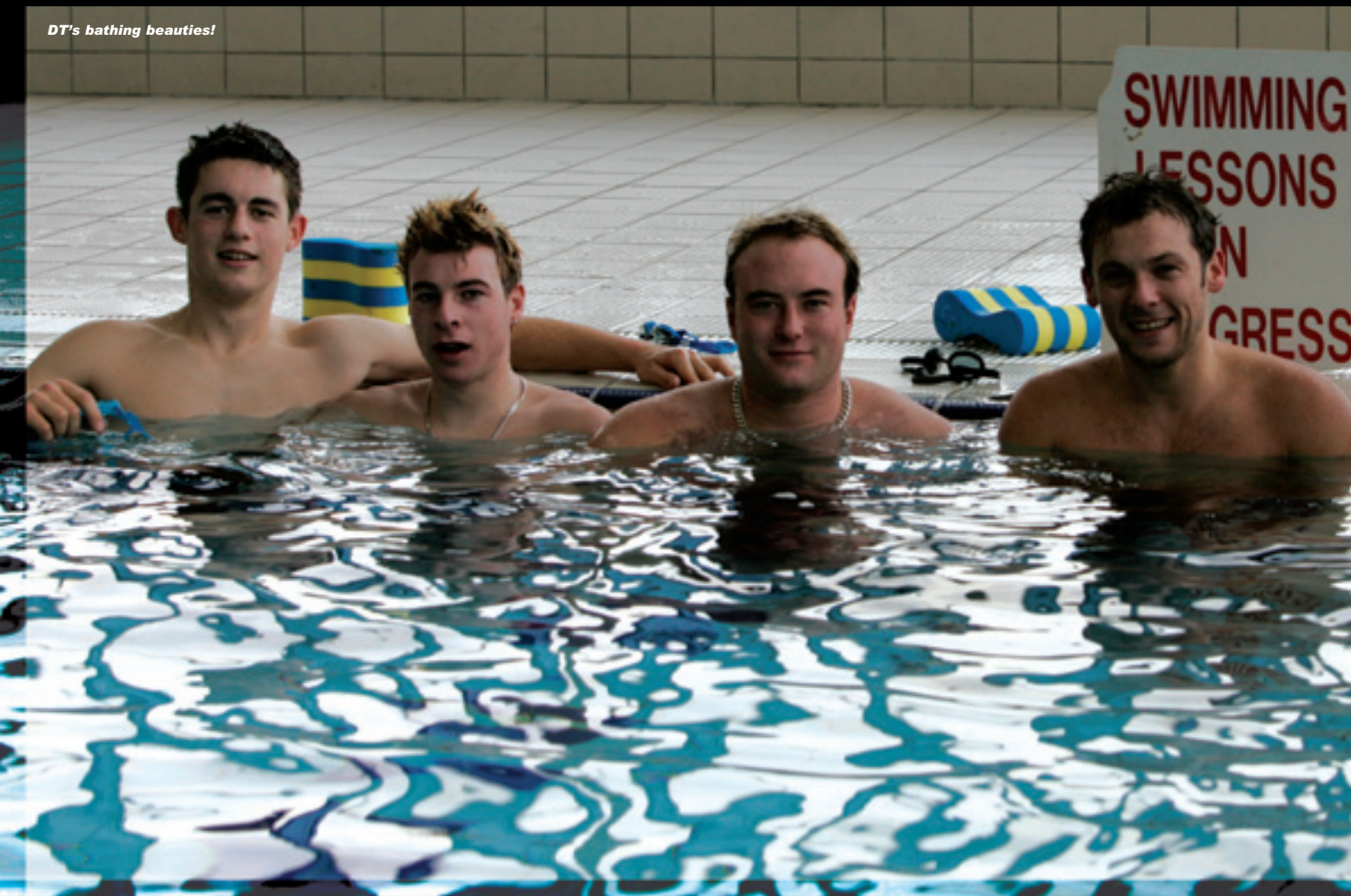
Thanks to Josh Coppins' candid interview on the previous five pages we know how important it is to get your pre-season training done – and

done right – but Lizzard doesn't really go into specifics. So to fully appreciate what dedicated riders put themselves through I joined a handful of Britain's top MXers at their winter training camp for a couple of days in November. This isn't necessarily the same routine Josh follows – although some elements are the same – but what I put myself through will stay with me forever. Let's get one thing absolutely clear, these boys are super-fit!

I'm 36 and consider myself to be reasonably fit compared to the guy on the street. My average week will consist of one or two games of squash, a couple of sessions on a rowing machine and maybe a light weights session so when I was invited down to Dave Thorpe's training camp to join the fun I wasn't too worried...I mean, how much training can you do in any one day?

I received a list of who I would be joining at

DT's bathing beauties!







the camp and my earlier feeling of not being too worried started to fade ever so slightly. The email informed me that my training partners would be Molson Kawasaki's Tom Church and Stephen Sword, Swift Suzuki's Jake Nicholls, CCM's Oliver Sandiford-Smith, Phoenix Tools Honda's Dave Yelland, KRM Honda's Chris Bastick, PAR Honda's Jordan Rose, Twisted 7 Kawasaki's Jack Hawes and Stone Supplies Honda's Jordan Carter. >>





*I remember when this was all fields! DT looks on as TC leads the chase...*



**The Magnificent Seven (and TC)**



Between them they cover a fairly broad spectrum from factory riders to privateers. I tried to boost my confidence by reminding myself I'd ridden at least six local enduros this year but this lift to my self-esteem was short-lived when I contracted the deadly man flu two weeks before I was due at the camp. So my planned pre-training camp training had to be shelved as my antibodies fought off the virus which, by the way, would probably have killed a small elephant! I did manage one game of squash the day before I left for camp but when I got in the van at 6.30am on the Tuesday I don't mind admitting I was more than a bit nervous.

The riders are signed up to the camp from November 1 right through to March, working five days a week from Monday to Friday with only a short break for Christmas. Food and lodgings are provided for the riders who live too far away to

commute and when I arrived Jake Nicholls, Ollie Sandiford-Smith, Chris Bastick and Jack Hawes were just finishing breakfast. The day would be starting with a run which I would have to do on a mountain bike as years of road running have damaged one of my knees. Okay, surely I could handle that...

We met up with TC, David Yelland and Jordan Carter at Woodbury Park and after a couple of minutes of banter between the lads it was time to go. The park is huge and at the start of the run I even had time to notice how beautiful a setting it is. Thick mist was laying at the bottom of the hills with the early sun casting a golden glow across the landscape. The terrain is hilly with lots of pebbly sandy tracks winding everywhere and is mostly carpeted in ferns and heather. At the bottom of the hills is plenty of water, from clear streams to bogs thick with mud.

Whatever the going, the boys' pace was steady and relentless and it wasn't long before I was starting to blow, especially once I'd had to carry my bike through a couple of particularly tricky sections. After about 25 minutes the sprint training was introduced which required the lads to run flat-out up a hill for about 50 metres then turn and walk back to where they started, then it was flat out for about 100 metres, then 150 metres. While this was going on I could only sit there trying to catch my breath. After about another 10 minutes of the run another sprint session was introduced over longer distances.

With a true motocross ethic they all wanted to win these sprints, even though they were shattered. The third and final sprint session was quite something to watch – after 50 minutes of running they then lifted a partner onto their backs and proceeded to complete the sprints like



that! When we got back to the car park they had run for a total of just under an hour yet still looked relatively fresh, unlike yours truly!

As soon as we had changed out of our muddy clothes we were off to the gym for the first of two 45-minute sessions. The session comprised a warm-up, then a weight circuit that concentrated on shoulders and arms. I just about managed to hold my own for the first loop around the circuit but when we had to go around again there really was nothing left in my arms – all I could do was push out the reps until I was nearly dropping the weights. I was partnered with Tom Church and as well as making it look easy he was also great at pushing me to my limits.

Each of the riders commented on how much better it is to train in a group as opposed to training alone – being part of a group keeps the motivation high and nobody wants to come second. Jake 'The Reverend' Nicholls managed to hit the nail on the head. "You simply can't train to this level on your own, not unless you're some sort of maniac."

I can certainly vouch for this as there were several times over the two days when, had I been alone, I would have simply stopped. As part of a group there was no way I wasn't going to finish. It's amazing that when you're convinced that there's absolutely nothing left in the tank you can always find just that little bit more.

After a 40-minute lunch break it was back into the gym for another 45-minute session – this time concentrating on legs – followed by an excruciating abs workout. While it's obvious why the legs get worked for motocross it's equally important to work on the abs as this builds a good core stability which is important for balance. The gym session finished with a trip to the rowing machines and while I could barely pull the chain as my arms were so weak, the boys were a blur next to me.

After I climbed off the rower I could easily have curled up in the car park and gone to sleep but no such luxury for me! It was a quick drive to the squash courts for an hour-and-a-half sweat off. It was here that I redeemed my poor gym work, victory was sweet and it was all mine! TC assured me that it was only because his strings were slack and I'll admit that Swordy wasn't there that day but I'll take it any way I can!

The training for day one was over and even though I had been expecting the boys to be fit I hadn't expected the level to be as high as it was. They are simply on another level compared to the vast majority of us.

That evening it was back to DT's house where the care of the riders passed from Mr to Mrs Thorpe. Dave's lovely wife Gail cooks for between six and eight people – five nights a week – and that's no mean feat as the riders are burning between 2500-3000 calories each day. The food is wholesome, varied and best of all bloody lovely!

Chatting individually to the riders that evening the first thing that became apparent was that they all share the same mindset from the youngest (Jack Hawes) to the oldest (Stephen Sword). I asked each of them what their motivation was to be beating themselves five days a week through the middle of winter and all of them had the same answer. "To be the best, to be world champion!"

With the exception of TC and Stephen Sword, all of the riders are aged between 17-20 yet all have a wise head on their young shoulders. The commitment, sacrifice and dedication that these lads put in is second to none. When the MX season finishes there are only about five short weeks off before the training camp starts and 47 weeks until the season finishes again. All of the riders agree that motocross is now at a level where nobody is able to rely on talent alone – physical training is an absolute must if you want to be the best.

It's probably fair to say that physical training isn't one of the more pleasurable things to do. "I don't particularly enjoy what we do, I enjoy what we're trying to achieve," says TC – although Swordy looks at it slightly differently. "When you enjoy the training it's half the battle."

After my first day's training I was leaning towards TC's outlook and when I found out that the next day was going to be even tougher I was practically toppling! I went back to my B&B and tried to get a good night's sleep ready for the next day – trouble was pre-match nerves had me awake at 6am, giving me an hour-and-a-half to worry about what was to come.

After a hearty breakfast it was back to Thorpey's where the mountain bikes were loaded up and we drove off to the starting point. I have to tell you that up until the previous day I hadn't ridden a bicycle off-road since I was about 14 so my heart sunk when I found out the ride was going to be 25 miles with about two-thirds of it off-road. Having picked up some of the determination I'd witnessed the previous day, I told myself that there was absolutely no way I wasn't going to finish – that would be letting myself and the riders down and that just wasn't an option.

Dave was going to ride with me so I wouldn't get lost and we set off two-and-a-half minutes before the others who followed in pairs separated by a further minute with the best cyclists setting off last. We appeared to be in a mystical part of Devon where all the roads go uphill and after about 20 minutes the peleton passed me like I was standing still! This was just before we climbed the longest and steepest hill I'd seen. I was in first gear, blowing out of my arse and trying not to cry as I watched the boys disappear in front of me!

>>



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The reward for reaching the top was moving onto the off-road section. From here I caught a glimpse of the others before they totally disappeared and I could only try my best to keep Thorpey in sight. I promise you I have no idea what was pushing my pedals round as I had no feeling in my legs at all. If it wasn't for DT constantly bending the truth as regards how near the finish we were I think I would have assumed the weak position, curled up in the nearest puddle of mud and refused to move!

Eventually, after 135 minutes of pure torture, I reached the finish and the rest of the lads who had finished a full 25 minutes ahead of me. I could barely stand up but they were all riding round the car park doing one-handed wheelies and jumps.

After a 30-minute break for lunch it was straight into the gym for an arms and chest weights circuit for about half-an-hour, then straight over to the leg machines for a further 30-minute session. The dedication that these riders put in is something to behold – whatever number of repetitions was asked of them they did and not once did I hear any moans or grumbles...apart from the ones from me! The gym work finished up with a further abs session and then it was straight off to the swimming pool.

The pool is a great CV workout and is good for your breathing technique as well as excellent for your legs. The session started off with a





"I'm a little teapot!"



quick 20 lengths to warm up – my arms were useless by this point so I could only manage breast stroke but the riders were all doing the crawl and doing it at a rate of knots. A series of leg and arm exercises was then introduced before the session finished off with another 20 lengths as fast as you could go. Amazingly, I didn't drag myself out of the pool last although now I think about it I maybe only did 18 lengths! Who cares, I'd completed two days and was still alive to tell the tale.

For me it was a personal triumph to have completed the two days without making myself look too much of a plum although the workout had been so intense I couldn't straighten my arms properly for about four days. These riders have been going through this regime five days a week since the first week of November and will still be going through it until the last week of March.

The sacrifices they make shouldn't be overlooked either. Living away from home, family, friends and possessions for five months at a time. Having to watch what you eat, certainly having to watch what you drink and seeing your girlfriend/partner only twice a week (I accept that some of you may think that's a bonus). It's something that certainly the younger riders are very focussed and single-minded about.

"She's cool with it but any grief and she's gone," was one response. "If she moans I'd fire

her off," was another.

They aren't being disrespectful or trying to be funny when they're saying this, it simply shows that they will let nothing get in the way of their dreams and goals.

Being physically fit also gives a mental boost to the riders – knowing that when they line up at the gate they have done absolutely everything in their power to be ready and knowing that whatever happens in the race it won't be their fitness that lets them down. The fitter and stronger you are can also help you prevent and recover from injuries. At a race back in May, Dave Yelland was catapulted from his bike. The next four bikes landed on him leaving Dave in intensive care with a broken femur, collarbone, both shoulder blades, a few ribs, a fractured ankle and five snapped bones in his neck. Just six months later and he was flying past me in the pool like Duncan Goodhew!

While each of the riders agree that it's better to train as a group it needs to be remembered that they are all bitter rivals when out on the track. They all get on well together with plenty of banter between them but once the season begins it's every man for himself.

From November to the end of December the riders don't ride motocross at all – not even at the weekends – but come January the motocross bikes will be slowly introduced into the regime, working on full moto endurance as

well as sprints. The MX teams will also have their own testing schedules so it's a case of everyone working together. If the boys are away testing then DT will send them off with a training programme to be kept up while they're away.

By March they will all be at a good level of fitness, peaking a couple of months later. Once the season is under way it's a case of maintaining that level. Obviously riding will take care of most of it but there will still be time spent in the gym every week alongside practicing.

Now knowing what these riders are putting themselves through you can imagine how devastating even the smallest of injuries can be, let alone a season-ending one. The racing itself is just one part of a much bigger picture and five months of relentless hard, hard work have gone in before the gate drops on the first moto of the season.

I for one have even more respect for these boys than I did before...oh, did I mention that I won the squash?

## CHEERS M'DEARS

You're all stars...

*This article couldn't have been written without the help of Jake Nicholls, Jordan Carter, Dave Yelland, Chris Bastick, Tom Church, Stephen Sword, Jack Hawes, Oliver Sandiford-Smith and Dave Thorpe so a huge thanks to you all. Also a special thanks to Gail Thorpe for feeding and watering me during my stay.*





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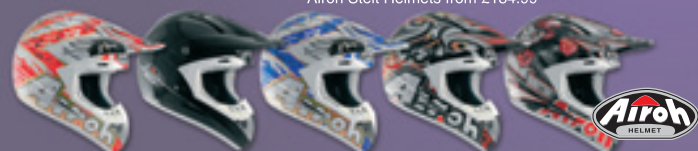
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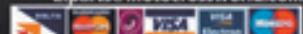
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# SHRED WHITE AND BLUE!

YAMAHA HAVE RULED THE GP SCENE OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF SEASONS WITH THEIR BRACE OF FLYING THUMPERS SO WE COULDN'T WAIT TO GET TO GRIPS WITH A '08 LIMITED EDITION WHITE 250F AND A MORE CONVENTIONALLY-COLOURED BLUE FOUR-FIDDY...

Words by **Chris Hammal** Photos by [still-mx.co.uk](http://still-mx.co.uk)

**Y**amaha have dominated world motocross in the last couple of years with Stefan Everts, Josh Coppins, Tony Cairoli, Billy MacKenzie, Davide Guarneri and Nico Aubin all taking the striking blue bikes to overall GP wins. In fact, during the two seasons since Yamaha introduced the latest ally-framed incarnations of their very successful YZF range the Yamahaulers have crossed the line first in 63 per cent of MX2 GP motos and 65 per cent of MX1 scraps at world championship level – that's pretty darn dominant!

It's 10 years since Yamaha released the first of the new-generation of short-stroke four-poppers to the public, the first being a 400cc model which later became a 426 and then a 450cc bike in 2003. Two years before Yamaha settled on a 0.45 litre capacity for their Open class weapon the YZ250F was launched and that soon became a must-have weapon for pro-class privateers in what was then known as the 125 class.

When you consider it took until 2002 for Honda to chuck out a rival 450 – and Suzuki and Kawasaki entered the Open class four-stroke wars even later than that – and 2004

before any rival manufacturers' 250Fs were let loose you wouldn't be crazy to think that Yamaha would be way ahead of the game in terms of reliability and performance. Unfortunately for Yamaha and despite what the GP results might tell us that's not actually always been the case.

Catastrophic valve failure haunted more than a few owners of zero-six 250Fs – the first of the ally-framed four-stroke models – but luckily that problem was quickly solved. Since then not much has changed – visibly at least – and the bikes look much the same for 2008 as they did for '06 except for matt black engine cases which look great probably until you ride it. Other visible changes include sleeker fork guards and new graphics but the more important changes can't be seen by the naked eye.

The 450 might be missing the stamped service-free silencer spotted on the American models – this is probably because of the tighter noise regulations the European market has – but there are plenty of engine, chassis and suspension mods to keep the blue – or white if you wanna spend an extra 50 bones to get something a little different – MX1 missile at the front of the pack.

>>



*The Mighty Hammal puts the '08 two-fiddy four-popper through its paces...*





...and then drops the  
hammer on the 450



*The limited edition 250F is a  
thing of great beauty – it was  
almost a shame to get it dirty*





# Race the Blue



Follow the 2007 MX2 World Champion and race the blue Yamaha YZ250F... or you could choose the limited edition version in white! Either way, Yamaha have a range of race bikes that continue to set performance standards, year after year.

To find out more, request a brochure or locate your nearest Authorised Yamaha off-road dealer, visit our website. Dominate the competition, just like Antonio Cairoli did in 2007!

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 **YAMAHA**  
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Engine, suspension and chassis mods keep the 450F box fresh



The motor has reshaped intake ports to enhance the bike's low to mid-range performance. To compliment the porting work new cam profiles change the valve timing helping create a better balance of both intake and exhaust performance for increased combustion efficiency. Tolerances throughout the engine have also been reduced which must make them tighter than a duck's ass in water.

The Yamaha engineers have reduced the backlash between the primary gears and also within the balancer gear making for better meshing which also ensures even lower levels of mechanical noise.

The chassis has a new steering head tube

which is 5mm shorter, as is the steering stem inside. The forged aluminum lower triple clamp is all new, featuring a 'H' shaped cross section which makes it stronger and lighter than before. Staying at the front end the forks have newly designed outer tubes with a more compact oil seal housing design which helps to reduce overall weight for lighter steering characteristics. Clicker settings are also revised.

The rear suspension has been changed to compliment the front and there's a new specification titanium spring – the collar and shaft are redesigned and the linkage ratio has been modified.

On the controls the front brake has a new lightweight assembly – the same fitted to the 250F last year – and features a new caliper with smaller pistons and smaller pads. The master cylinder has been reduced in size to save weight and the lever has a new design – so it's no good keeping that spare in your tool box anymore.

The nerds at Yamaha have shaved more weight by using a lighter axle, collar and wavy discs with elongated slots rather than circular holes. To keep your feet planted there's also new 55mm stainless steel footrests.

Now if you're still with me I'll move onto the 250. Yamaha must be doing something right as we all know how dominant Tony Cairoli is on his Yamahauler. The one we tested was a limited edition white one which looks very nice.

The engine has had a few tweaks for 2008 with a new lightweight high-compression piston raising the compression ratio from 12.5:1 to 13.5:1. To help handle this higher ratio the clutch assembly has been redesigned to increase oil flow to the plates. The transmission backlash between the primary drive and driven gear has been reduced and the 250F has a new quieter silencer – 94db – as well as fine tuning of the carburettor and CDI. The 250F also features a new shape rear brake pedal which is lighter >>



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*The 250F power may not be massive but the delivery is buttery smooth*



too and the chassis has all the same changes as the 450F – don't worry, I won't bore you with that all again.

I was interested to see how the 2008 YZF's would perform on the Tonymoto track. It's 11 years since I watched in awe as Doug Henry won the last supercross of the '97 season by a long, long way on a factory YZF400 – I don't think anybody back then had even the slightest inkling of the impact the new generation of four-strokes would make on our sport over the next decade. Yamaha were of course the first Japanese manufacturer out of the gate with their 400 (later to become the 426 then 450 model) and so I was keen to see how it would perform on a freezing cold winter morning in Winchester – you can't get much less Vegas than that!

Until this day DBR had not tested an ally-framed YZF450. Certain staff members have ridden and even raced them but Yamaha have never ponied up a bike for our test team to

dissect – fools! Out on the track this bike has plenty of pull and torque but not in a negative way. It's all useable power and even from a slow speed you can snap the throttle on and it'll grunt away with so much power and traction I even found myself coming out of one corner rodeo style as my left hand slipped from the bars due to the unexpected delivery of power and grip.

For a big four-stroke the 450 handles great – more like a 250F only with loads more power. It's a very well-balanced bike and you can throw it about and it doesn't feel heavy or hard work and doesn't fight back. I like the bigger, higher footrests which allow me to move about on the bike easier but on the other hand I didn't like the high seat height – in the corners I felt more perched on top of the bike rather than in it.

The steering is good. In the corners it is very responsive and gave good feedback and I didn't have any unwanted surprises. I couldn't test the suspension very well as the two tracks at

Tonymoto were groomed to perfection and smoother than a Barry White album. I landed hard a few times and it soaked it all up well with a plush feel.

Overall I'd say this is a great bike and would be very competitive in almost anyone's hands. I had a lot of fun on it and I didn't want to give it back.

The YZ250F is a bike I know quite well – I raced one full time in '06 – and so I was equally eager to take this for a spin to see how much Yamaha had improved the bike since then. Out on the track it felt like a good all-round bike. The power isn't massive but the delivery is nice and smooth and revs out well making it very rideable.

The handling felt a lot like the 450F – damn good in the corners and easy to control everywhere else. I think the suspension is set up for those fat burger-eating Americans because it is hard from new but that's a thing that you can of course adjust to suit you.



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# SPECIFICATIONS

## YZ250F >>

**Capacity:** 250cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 77mm x 53.6mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Carburetor:** Keihin FCR MX-37/1  
**Front suspension:** Kayaba fork (300mm travel)  
**Rear suspension:** Kayaba (307mm travel)  
**Front brake:** 250mm disc  
**Rear brake:** 245mm disc  
**Wheelbase:** 1469mm  
**Seat height:** 997mm  
**Dry weight:** 92.7kg

## YZ450F >>

**Capacity:** 449cc  
**Bore and stroke:** 95mm x 63.4mm  
**Transmission:** Five-speed  
**Carburetor:** Keihin FCR MX-39/1  
**Front suspension:** Kayaba fork (300mm travel)  
**Rear suspension:** Kayaba (307mm travel)  
**Front brake:** 250mm disc  
**Rear brake:** 245mm disc  
**Wheelbase:** 1495mm  
**Seat height:** 1001mm  
**Dry weight:** 99.5 kg

*It's hard to believe it's a full  
 10 years since Yamaha kicked  
 off the four-stroke revolution*



## TONYMOTO MAGIC

### IT'S TRACK-TASTIC!

Tonymoto – situated next to the A34 just north of Winchester – is undoubtedly one of this country's premier off-road facilities. So when we were asked by Yamaha to pick a venue where we'd prefer to test the 2008 YZFs we got straight on the phone to Mr Moto to secure the use of his awesome all-weather wonderland. For more information on Tony's super-sweet selection of practice circuits suitable for riders of all ages and skill level log on to [www.tonymotomx.co.uk](http://www.tonymotomx.co.uk) or call the man himself on 07729 827981 and tell him we sent ya!





dirt bike show

A cracking pair (of cylinders)



Relentless Suzuki's Jamie Law, Lewis Gregory, Rob Hooper and Scott Probert



Title winning Kawasakis belonging to Katherine Prumm, Kurt Nicoll and Billy MacKenzie



One Industries stuff looks much better without Rush Racing's Tim and Scott Wadman in the shot

# HOT DATE!<sup>o</sup>

DIRT BIKE SHOW PACKS 'EM IN AT STONELEIGH...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by rayarcher.com

With its corking cocktail of new bikes, new kit, hot women, star riders, factory machines and some mega bargains – plus, for some at least, four crushing hangovers on the trot – the Dirt Bike Show is THE not-to-be-missed date on the off-road calendar.

And it's not just us who think so! The December event attracted a whopping 21,000 people through the doors of Stoneleigh Park making it one of the most successful shows ever and giving traders, visitors and the industry in general a chance to see out 2007 in style.

Dave Watson of show promoters Promoto was a happy – if ever-so-slightly harassed – man when we caught up with him on the Saturday afternoon. "It's been a bumper year for customers coming through the doors," reckoned the Race Spec boss. "It's really good for the industry that people are coming to the show – it

means they're out there and shows that the industry is reasonably buoyant. We're certainly up on last year for the first three days and if today's figures are the same as last year we're going to have a record year.

"I was worried that yesterday's weather may have put people off but it didn't and Saturday was the biggest individual day for the show in terms of attendance since we've been at Stoneleigh."

For the first time a Trials Village had been created with the likes of Gas Gas, Scorpa, Sherco and Beta all rubbing shoulders together – a move that went down well with Gasser importer John Shirt Jnr.

"It's good to have a Trials Village – they need to keep doing that so that Joe Public gets used to the trials lads being here," said Shirt. "I think the show itself has been very, very good – very positive. Thursday surprised me because it was

flat-out. There was good interest in the bikes, the retail stand's been okay and plenty of interest in our new prototype four-stroke trials bike.

"We're always here – I'm obsessed with promotion and team and riders. It's a shame that Montesa aren't here really because they won the world championship and they should be here. Everybody else is here."

While Montesa opted to give the show a miss all the other big-name bike manufacturers had a presence along with some of the biggest names in off-road accessories and clothing – and they don't come any bigger than Fox Racing whose European head honcho Ian Calvesbert explained the importance of having a stand at Stoneleigh.

"We want to get the message out and a lot of people come to this show. It's a shop window. It's for our dealers to be able to give the service to the customers. It's been excellent. A lot of people, a lot of visits to the stand. Really good."



Billy Mac receives a road burner from Alex Brawn as his reward for winning the British MX1 title



Airoh give it some helmet



Patsy Quick's all smiles before her ill-fated Dakar attempt



The new Trials Village goes down well with standholders and visitors



KTM's Alex Snow, Shaun Simpson, James Noble and Shaun Sisterson







CCM's new MX bike gets plenty of attention



RC's lid takes pride of place on the Fox Racing stand



Charley Boorman's much-travelled BMW

## OARSOME!

WILLET'S A WINNER

The Dirt Bike Show isn't just about selling and showing, it's also about entertaining and the 2007 event had something for everyone.

The Live Action Arena was as big a hit as ever with Steve Colley's amazing trials demos and some bar-to-bar minibike action while the new forums handed out expert advice on everything from riding technique from Mark Hucklebridge through to physical fitness from DBR's medical man Alan Milway.

And Alan was also heavily involved with the programme on the DBR Live Stage which, when it wasn't hosting fashion shows and the PS2 Challenge, was the base for a rowing competition.

The rowing challenge – basically a flat-out 500m sprint – has proved popular at events over in the States and the SIS-supported Stoneleigh version attracted some big names to the stage who sweated it out in a bid to break the magic 90-second barrier.

Top of the lot after four days of competition was David Willet with a time of 1:29.3 closely followed by Huck with 1:30 and Billy MacKenzie with 1:30.1. Desert racer Patsy Quick lived up to her name with a highly respectable 1:59.4 while DBR's marketing manager Rick Wilkinson needed medical attention and oxygen after storming across the line with a 1:49.3! Way to go Slick...





*The Maxxis stand proves strangely popular...*



*TMs – and lots of 'em*



*...while TC's Kwacker remains strangely upright!*



*Steve Colley's extreme climbing demo goes down very well*



*Mmmmmm, Nadia!*



*The show does have its knockers!*



*Brian Wheeler and Mark Hucklebridge hand out coaching tips*



## medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website [www.mxfitness.co.uk](http://www.mxfitness.co.uk) or call him on 07810 827427

# BANANAS!

**You'd be mad to take on a three-hour hare and hounds or an even longer enduro without any physical preparation but the time in the saddle these events require makes training tricky...**

Words by Alan Milway

**SEEN BY** some as the more mature (or perhaps less glamorous) sibling of motocross, enduro events have been brought into focus recently – especially thanks to the domination of the Yank scene by a beefy bloke from the Isle of Man named David Knight.

And after my recent gruelling introduction to enduros in the wet Welsh mountains I thought it time to address some of the training areas that enduro riders really need to be aware of if they want to not only compete at these events but also succeed in them.

Although not run at the frenetic pace of a motocross race (you can discount this comment for a pro-level hare and hounds) the sheer duration of the events makes this sport hugely demanding both physically and mentally. As the race progresses concentration starts to waver as fatigue sets in and energy levels dip to leave co-ordination impaired. Now throw in some bogs to get stuck in, climbs where stalling means much swearing and more good old fashioned mud and slime and you have a tough Sunday ahead of you!

Heart rates may not reach the dizzying heights achieved in MX but at a hare and hounds event they won't be far off – and these bad boys often run over three hours! Simply put enduro and hare and hounds events are very physically challenging so you would be mad not to consider the importance of some mid-week training before pulling the bike out of the garage the following weekend.

Steady endurance training should form the

backbone to any weekly exercise as this helps the body adapt to prolonged exercise and activity. It makes the body more efficient at taking in, transporting and using oxygen and fuel and will help postpone the muscle fatigue and general tiredness felt on the bike. This kind of training needs to be done for prolonged periods and if events are three hours then trying to at least cover this duration in a week will be of great benefit.

The major challenge to enduro riders looking for that 'edge' is the time to train as for a sport such as this the amount of time involved to reach a very good level of endurance fitness is large. For marathon runners and road cyclists training volume is very high and is the predominant way that they train – so as hare and hounds events have a similar profile, training and riding volume really helps.

Any weak muscle areas of the body will be highlighted after a day on the bike and can really hamper our enjoyment of riding. Poor core stability (poor strength of the muscles of the stomach and lower back) may lead to lower back pain and compromised technique so exercising these muscles will help ward off fatigue setting in and aid control and improve riding. Upper body strength can also suffer as often endurance exercise doesn't involve any upper body contribution. Running and cycling – although ideal forms of training – don't offer any test for the arms, shoulders or upper back. Weights training or including exercises such as swimming and rowing will help combat this.

It should also be said that riding itself is perfect training! Being on the bike for long periods helps improve concentration and fitness but is often unrealistic. For those of us that can't get out twice a week – especially during the winter months – trying to replicate what we go through on the bike is very beneficial and it is clear that trying to compete in such strenuous activities without prior training will be very difficult! A professional rider may not do as much in the gym as an amateur rider but often they are able to put in many hours in the saddle during the week.

Another contributing factor of fatigue is lack of 'energy'. The feeling of light headedness, dizziness and general lethargy is often down to low blood sugar levels and poor supply of energy for the muscles. The body's preferred source of fuel is carbohydrate and it can burn this readily to allow the muscles to continue to function. For endurance exercise this is done aerobically (with oxygen) and energy supply is maximised with carbohydrate being broken right down to carbon dioxide and water. We can also gain a lot of energy from fat stores in the body (the supply is almost unlimited in the body with large reserves for even very lean people). However, fat is broken down relatively slowly so exercise can only be maintained at a low level if we rely on fat as the sole fuel source. With training the body adapts to burn both fat and carbohydrate together, utilising fat more readily (making us







leaner and healthier) and also prolonging the supply of carbohydrate so we can sustain a good level of exercise. Protein can be used as a fuel but only in extreme situations and as a last resort – but it is of great benefit to aid recovery so is important after an event.

In a well-fed, rested state we have in our body enough carbohydrate for about one-and-a-half to two hours of exercise. If exercise time goes beyond this and we don't take in carbohydrate we risk running out and relying purely on burning fat. This sees us rapidly slow up and is that feeling of 'hitting the wall' when we have nothing left and are forced to move at a shuffle. This might be okay for a slow cruise back but not for riding challenging terrain in a race! It is therefore very important to address taking in fuel for enduro riders – this is often a critical factor in your success in an event!

Carbohydrate is found in foods such as pasta,

rice, bread, cereals and bananas etc. Most of these are not ideal to take in while riding but decent energy bars, Jaffa Cakes, cereal bars, malt loaf and even jelly babies will give you a good, quick hit of much needed carbohydrate and can be stuffed in during a pit stop. However, the best method for taking in carbohydrate is through the humble Camelbak. Filled with an energy drink such as those from SIS they are a very easy way to carry carbohydrate and also much needed water – another vital requirement.

Sipping little and often will keep carb levels topped up and help you go much further than before. Many laboratory tests and university studies show exactly this – we can go further and for longer if we take in carbohydrate during exercise. And if it works for runners and cyclists it works for us too!

If you are going to try racing with a Camelbak it is worth using it in your riding and practising

first – especially if you want to try it with energy drinks to make sure your stomach doesn't get upset (some stomachs react differently to different drinks). Also plan a few good 'carb loading' meals before the weekend as maximising your food stores is important and even if you are trying to lose weight still have two good carb meals before an event – you'll burn more during the event than you take in.

The requirements of an enduro rider are different to those of a motocross rider – most notably due to the duration of the events and the challenge to energy supply. Training towards long duration events is important and although the intensity need not be as high as for those training for MX, repeated sessions and longer sessions make it hard to always fully prepare. But just adding a cycle ride to work or a run back at night will help build up duration of training – all this with the aim of a better day come Sunday!



# NO MORE MR BAD GUY!

CHAD REED'S HAD SOME BAD PRESS RECENTLY – IN THE US AND THE UK – BUT WHEN OUR TAME YANK HOOKED UP WITH HIM AS HE PREPARED FOR THE NEW SX SEASON HE FOUND A HAPPY, RELAXED AUSSIE LOOKING TO MAKE A FRESH START IN '08...

**C**had Reed is a bit of an enigma – both on the track and off. On a track he's shown that he's probably the only rider capable of beating James Stewart with any regularity. Off the track he can be perceived as moody, hard to talk to and even downright impossible.

Coming into the 2007 season Reed fully expected to take his San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Yamaha to the championship but it didn't come together for him quite like he had planned.

"There were a few things missing," reckons Reed. "To start with, coming into the season not healthy and not even knowing whether or not I was going to race the first four weeks wasn't necessarily the best start to the season. That didn't help any. From bike set-up to some personal things with riding and all that kind of stuff, it all adds up.

"When I was at my best and my strongest I just felt a part of the bike. I think over the last few years it's been frustrating to fight some things with the bike. But we're learning year by year and we're getting closer and closer but as a person you want things to happen yesterday. I'm being patient and the people around me are being patient as well. This year will be better than last. I'm in a better spot than I was last year – I wasn't even riding at this point last year."

Starting the season injured isn't anything new for Reed who kicked off his 2004 championship attempt with a shoulder injury.

"When I had shoulder surgery it was the end of '03 going into the '04 season and I had only been on the bike three days or something like that going into the opener," Reed says. "But I was at a different point in my career, I think. I had spent so much time testing and I was on the best bike possible – the bike was amazing. I felt like I was stronger and ready to win. I felt like I was a part of something that was going to win. I had a great end of the '03 season and was ready to go.

"It was a real bummer that Ricky got hurt that year. I think that was probably the one year that I can honestly say with all respect to him that I felt like I was going to win whether he was there or not. That was just 100 per cent about feeling good, feeling confident and having better equipment than what he had at the time. Since

then the roles have been reversed a little bit and it's been tough to swallow."

Part of Reed's reputation for being a bit distant seems to come from the times when he's not doing as well as he would like. He gets down on himself and his team and tends to become a bit anti-social but he sees 2008 as a new start.

"For sure I get bummed out. It shows. It shows in everyone. Right now I feel good. I feel re-motivated, fresh, we have a new direction, we have a new bike and things right now look good on paper. The way that I feel at the test track, I honestly feel I have a great shot at winning. Taking a beating through supercross and then doing it all again during the Nationals isn't so fun. The winning is what motivates me. I love to race bikes and it's obviously my job but if there's no winning then I don't know if I want to continue to do it.

"I work too hard to go out there and feel like I should be better. I'm not scared of anything, really. I'm not scared of hard work, I'm not scared of changing up my programme, I'm not scared of anything. This year's going to be a big year. It's a year that's going to be make or break for me. All of my contracts are up and I don't know what's in the future for me – whether I stay around or I go home racing cars or what. We'll see."

When pressed as to whether he's implying that he might retire at the end of 2008, Reed's not quick to commit to that possibility. "It's hard to say that I'd be done. I have a lot of will and everything that it takes to win but if certain things are holding me back from my goals then you may see a whole different Chad in '09 – that's for sure. It's frustrating."

Reed says that it would be entirely different if everything was going well and he just wasn't fast enough. That would be an easier pill to swallow for him. "I really feel at this point that it's not me. I feel like my programme, my training...I feel like I'm covering my bases but it's things that are out of my control. Other riders have made it very public as to what those problems are and I think I've done a pretty good job of sheltering the problems but it seems like the cat's out of the bag and it is what it is but we as a team have been struggling with some set-up and it's been like that since 2005."

Reed says that when his set-up isn't perfect he has to adjust his speed to the bike's capabilities. He can't go as fast as his brain and his body will allow. "You just can't. It's not physically possible. We've gone a small direction better but we'll see how that is. I can honestly say that as I sit here today that I'm by far the fastest guy out at the test track and I feel comfortable but the guy that's winning races is a different guy so we'll see."

However, the perception from the fans and even pit pundits tends to be that Chad Reed just is not fast enough to race with James Stewart. "I don't think that's 100 per cent accurate. I think the speed is one thing but going that speed and being comfortable is something else. As a rider you're going off of a feeling and a confidence and if something's not giving you confidence and not giving you the feel that you like it's hard to push that limit. I'm not going to sit here and lie and say that James and Ricky don't haul ass. They do. They lay it down and they go fast. I'm anywhere from first to third in that group.

"On a good track – or a track that suits me – yeah, I can be the fastest guy but the window is small for me. But in the past I felt like the window was always pretty big. Even on what seemed like a bad day we were pretty good. It hasn't been like that in a few years and it's been frustrating for me. But I'm ready, dude. I don't want to go anywhere. I love this sport and I love racing in the US.

"If I was to take a career change then it wouldn't be here and I don't know if I'm ready to leave here yet. I love it. I'm not ready to give it up yet. The money's great but that's not what motivates me. I would give that up in a second just to find happiness and that's the truth."

Of course, there have been quite a few riders who were continually lured back from impending retirement by the big paydays afforded to top racers in the AMA SX series.

"I'm 25. I don't even see an end. If you see the end then I think that's kind of dangerous. I know what I want in my heart and we're going to chase that. I'm more motivated than ever just because I made a lot of changes this year and a lot of people didn't really like it so it's kind of like beating a dead horse. It just sucks to be on the end of that because I made a choice not





# STATESIDE

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and launched bi-weekly MX

magazine Motocross Illustrated covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...



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Chad and Timmy Ferry (#15) fight it out for the holeshot at the US Open – this year the Aussie intends to put the #22 Yamaha on top of the box



to race the Nationals.

"A lot of people in magazines or whatever, they make you out to be whoever they want you to be. One minute you're the hero and the next minute you're the bad guy and it seems like I'm the bad guy now. I don't feel like I've changed at all. I'm still me. I do things that feel right to me and make choices that are good for me and I can live with that. I wake up in the morning and I know that I made those choices. It's been frustrating this summer to listen to some of the crap talk but it is what it is.

"My opinion about the Nationals is what it is. I don't like the schedule and I think they drag it out way too long. Some of the tracks are the most awesome tracks I've ever ridden on and some of them are pathetic. That's my honest opinion. But I think that's normal. I don't think any rider likes every track. I don't think that's humanly possible. And I have a team that offered half-a-season of racing and I could still make good money, if not more, doing that. Tell me who in their right mind wouldn't take that! It's an easy decision to make.

"As I sit here today I really think it would be awesome to go out and race one more outdoor season and just give it everything I've got – win or lose – but at this point that's a long way away because of what I have planned and if I did race the

Nationals my schedule would be nuts because of my commitment with Australian SX and all of that [during the American summer]. I'm not pussing out. I'm not scared of getting beat. I'm not scared of the hard work. I'm not scared of none of that. It's not like I hate the tracks so I'm not going. First, the team didn't want to go and, number two, even if I wanted to go it's not that fun."

Reed does miss the Nationals, though, despite his issues with them. "I miss the racing. I really, really miss the racing. Friday afternoons when you're sitting at home and your friends are at the races and you're checking the internet and seeing who's doing what and cheering your buds on over the weekend and checking lap times, you kind of wish you were there. But then Monday morning, they don't have anything good to say about it. They're all complaining and saying the track was s\*\*\*t or this was dumb or that was dumb and then I'm thinking it doesn't feel so bad."

People forget that Chad Reed was giving Ricky Carmichael fits during the 2006 Nationals. "I think on a good weekend I was a strong second-place guy whether James [Stewart] was there or not. Ricky's Ricky. I don't feel that bad. There's so much talk about James Stewart but, dude, he got his ass handed to him by a retired guy. That's harsh but it's

the truth. No amount of anything could stop Ricky – not even James Stewart. So it's not too bad [to finish second to RC]."

That's not the type of comment that will endear Reed to Stewart or to Stewart's legions of fans but they don't exactly have a history of being friendly. "Straight up and down, the honest truth is that the three of us don't necessarily love each other. They're [Stewart and Carmichael] made out to be friends and they're all tight and whatever but that's all bulls\*\*t. As a rider I've heard and seen a lot and they're not best buds. They're not what the media makes out and what they make out in the public eye. But that's all part of the political side of the sport. I'm the guy on the outside. You've got those two guys that are the American heroes and they wear the same gear company and all of that stuff so you can't have guys that are the poster kids for one company and the next minute they're hating each other and fighting.

"There's no love lost between those two. They don't bro down. They're not tight. Away from it, me and Ricky talk. We get on. James and I get on. I don't think that my relationship with Ricky or James is any different than what those two have with each other. That's the behind-the-scenes side of it. If you look at the magazines or watch what the fans or spectators say on the outside of it then you'd think they're cool but I've seen different and know different."

Reed says that in order for him to end the 2008 season on an up-note he needs to have things fall so that he can race how he knows how. "I think that coming in healthy and being able to give it everything I've got, that's going to make me happy. Me and my team will know where we stand set-up wise and what the expectation is for that and that's it. I'm just trying to go out there and challenge. We're going to do things a lot different – probably a lot different than I've ever done them – so I'm looking forward to it.

"No excuses. I'll go out there and give it everything I've got and if we're the best we're the best and if we're not we'll go back to the drawing board again. I'm not afraid to go out and try new things and work my butt off to make stuff happen. I'm just looking forward to the new season with a team that has a year under their belt."









# CHAPTER ONE

THE WAIT IS OVER AND THE SMACK TALK STOPS AS THE  
GATE FINALLY DROPS ON THE 2008 AMA SX SERIES...

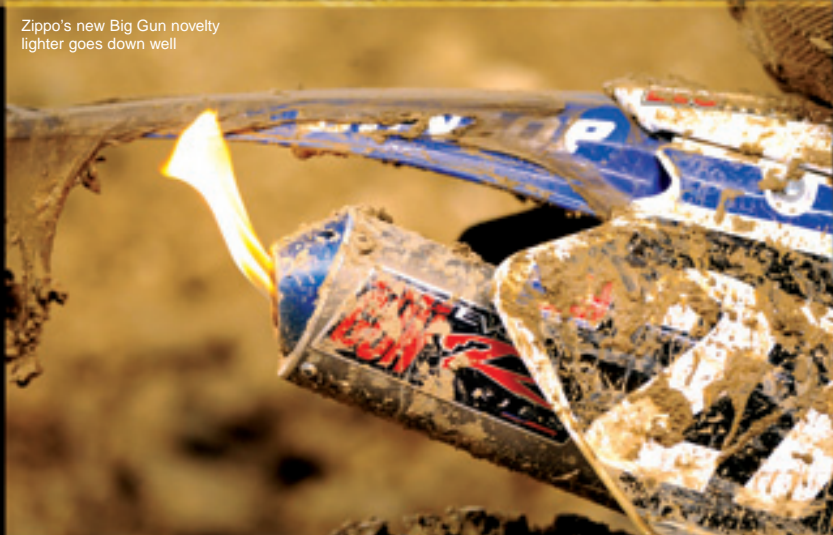
AMA SX WRAP





Broc Heplar gets buck wild as the gate drops on the Lites Main Event

Zippo's new Big Gun novelty lighter goes down well



A pair of big doubles make for an awesome rhythm section

Coming into Anaheim 1 just about everyone's lost in the talk about defending AMA supercross champ James Stewart – and rightly so as Stewart dominated the 2007 series with 13 wins on his way to his first AMA SX crown. But Chad Reed hasn't exactly been secretive about his desire to no longer be an also-ran at the races and the Aussie draws first blood.

As Team Yamaha's Grant Langston grabs the first holeshot of the year, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Stewart finds himself on the ground in the first turn and is forced to remount in last place. "I was a little late off the gate," Stewart says. "I don't know if I spun or what. I almost looped it out but I got a handful of throttle and headed into the first corner and I thought I was going to get the holeshot, actually, because I don't know who it was – maybe Langston – overshot the corner a little bit and I was cruising around and got hit from the rear and it pushed my front end out.

"Obviously, I was stuck there. I knew it was a Honda. I think it might have been Windham or somebody stuck in my bike so I had to wait for them to get going and by then I was way back."

Reed has three previous wins in Anaheim and he grabs the lead from Langston before the end of the first lap, only to stall on lap two and hand the lead back to Langston while Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Mike Alessi assumes second, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Timmy Ferry takes over third and Reed gets back going again in fourth.

"I knew I needed to get there and get a good start and it was rutty and every mistake that I made was always around people so I wanted to put together a good start and get out there," Reed says. "I saw GL and we came together in the first turn and from there it was all blue. I put my head down and made a mistake and I stalled it – I don't know where that came from but I did that twice tonight. I don't know if it was my fault or not."

Reed works his way back by the front three over the next three laps and takes the lead back over on lap five. At this point Stewart's already running sixth. Reed immediately begins to stretch his lead out over Langston and Ferry on the muddy, rutted track while Stewart tries to find his way by the duo. At the halfway point of the 20-lap race Langston's forced to single the finish line double by a lapper which allows Ferry to close up on him but as Ferry and Langston fight it out for second Stewart jumps past both of them over the track's infield triple to take over the runner-up spot, about 10 seconds behind Reed.

Ferry also fights his way by Langston a few laps later and from there the race is over. "We definitely went back and forth," Ferry says of his battle with Langston for third. "Me and Grant were so close in speed that it came down to who was going to make a mistake. Obviously, the track was really, really tough, so I was definitely glad to come out on top. He had a really good outdoor season so it's good to start out this supercross season ahead of him."

So Reed wins the series opener followed by team-mates Stewart and Ferry. Langston hangs on for fourth while Torco Racing Fuels Honda's Kevin Windham comes home fifth after starting outside the top 10.

"This off-season was pretty brutal," Reed says of the speculation surrounding his motivations. "A lot of things were questioned from my riding to my weight to whether or not I wanted to race or wanted to win. I guess fat guys can win too! It's all good. I took it all for the right reasons. I felt like I needed a break. The outdoors were wearing on me and I wasn't having fun and I went and did things that were fun and that I chose to do – driving cars or whatever. I partied all summer and I had a great time. I'm not going to lie. I brought it to the races when it counted."

Stewart's second place still puts him only three points behind Reed in the chase for the 2008 championship. "I was able to get to the top five, I was able to get





Ryan Dungey kicks off his West Coast campaign with a win



First blood goes to Speedy Reedy



K-Dub thought they said 'tash for cash'



The gate drops on the SX Main with Troy Adams (#44) sandwiched between the eventual 1-2 of Chad Reed and James Stewart



Ivan Tedesco lines up a block pass on Andrew Short



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## SERIES STANDINGS

### SUPERCROSS

|    |                 |           |
|----|-----------------|-----------|
| 1  | Chad Reed       | 25 points |
| 2  | James Stewart   | 22        |
| 3  | Timmy Ferry     | 20        |
| 4  | Grant Langston  | 18        |
| 5  | Kevin Windham   | 16        |
| 6  | Mike Alessi     | 15        |
| 7  | Davi Millsaps   | 14        |
| 8  | Andrew Short    | 13        |
| 9  | Nick Wey        | 12        |
| 10 | David Vuillemin | 11        |

### LITES

|    |                  |           |
|----|------------------|-----------|
| 1  | Ryan Dungey      | 25 points |
| 2  | Jason Lawrence   | 22        |
| 3  | Justin Brayton   | 20        |
| 4  | Dan Reardon      | 18        |
| 5  | Austin Stroupe   | 16        |
| 6  | Tommy Hahn       | 15        |
| 7  | Gavin Gracyk     | 14        |
| 8  | Andrew McFarlane | 13        |
| 9  | Chris Bloese     | 12        |
| 10 | Will Hahn        | 11        |



Reed tops the podium flanked by Stewart and Ferry



Timmy Ferry overhauls Grant Langston for third



Stewart charges from last to second



Nick Wey runs top 10 in the Supercross division

Aussie Brett Metcalfe fails to make an impression



Suzuki new boy Mike Alessi comes home in sixth



Jason Lawrence's chance of victory ends on the floor

Privateer Jeff Gibson

around those guys and then once I was in second Chad was gone," Stewart says. "I was happy about it. I felt like coming from last to second was like a win. I showed some heart and it felt good."

Although the 450s don't disappoint, most pit pundits expect the Lites class to supply the fireworks at Anaheim 1 and the small bikes pull through. Torco Racing Fuels Honda's Dan Reardon grabs the Lites holeshot over Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Austin Stroupe, Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey, MDK KTM's Justin Brayton, Stroupe's team-mate Brett Metcalfe and Boost Mobile/Yamaha of Troy's Jason Lawrence.

Reardon leads the first four laps before Lawrence finds his way past his flailing competition on the tricky, rutted track and into the lead. However, Dungey's hot on his heels and finds his way by at the halfway point of the 15-lap Main.

"I think I clicked up into second gear on the start and I think I forgot and clicked up again and started in third," Lawrence says. "I didn't come out that good but at the end of the first lap I was in fifth so there were a lot of people not taking the good lines. Pretty much I was right there in the beginning. I tried

to be real patient and get to the front and I did and then Ryan jumped in behind me and made it tough and I was getting nervous so I backed it down."

Dungey takes over the lead and Lawrence follows him but then Lawrence falls down on the tricky track and loses touch with Dungey. From here it is all Dungey. "I thought it'd be good if I followed him for a while and pressured him into a mistake but I followed him and I pressured myself into a mistake," Lawrence says. "I went down and Ryan won but I'm three points behind. I can't complain."

Lawrence hangs on for second – just in front of Brayton, Reardon and Stroupe – but just like the beginning of the Lites East championship last year round one belongs to Dungey.

"We all bunched up and I was in second waiting to get into first and I kind of got slammed in a corner and then got back to fourth," Dungey says of the beginning of his race. "Then Lawrence and Brayton got by me. But I was proud of myself because last year, being a rookie, I would've freaked out but this year I was acting mature. I took my time and let it come to me. I got a lead and put in some good laps. Everybody put up a fight tonight so it was good."



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# LESSONS LEARNED

SO WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN WE DRAW FROM ANAHEIM 1? OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER READS ALOUD FROM THE FORM BOOK AFTER THE AMA SX OPENER...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

**W**ell, the big to-do at Anaheim is over. The opening round of the Monster Energy Supercross series was an exciting race with lots of drama. Going into the race there were as many unknowns as things that we could take to the bank.

Which James Stewart would show up? The one that dominated the last supercross season or the rider that cartwheeled away his outdoor title? Would Chad Reed continue his winning ways? Reed dominated the US Open and Bercy after admittedly sitting on the couch all summer. The media and competition that thought out loud that he would struggle with finding his race pace after all the non-activity were wrong after those races. Would CR show us that he had something for the Stewart train?

What about Yamaha's Grant Langston? He was on such a roll last summer that you could've called him butter. GL8 came on like wildfire in the nationals, won the US Open and beat Reed one night at Bercy. He was on the '08 YZ450 that he said was unbelievable. Could he step his game up and get a wheel on the podium? What about Monster Energy's Tim Ferry? Would he keep up his comeback? Add in the new ride that Ivan Tedesco got, Andrew Short and Davi Millsaps showing up healthy and ready to go and you have an exciting opening round!

So what did we learn from the first race? Well, I'm going to tell you guys but with a caveat – the rain that fell made the track very challenging and it really wasn't a true indication of what the guys are going to do. Heck, half the field in the 450 class didn't even jump the second triple! When was the last time that happened? But this much we did learn. James Stewart showed up looking lean and mean. Stewie couldn't beat the mighty Carmichael in an AMA series so he tried to replicate RC's programme. And part of that is hiring away RC's trainer Aldon Baker. Baker you know came at a serious price because Aldon told his other clients like Ben Townley that he was exclusive to James. That's some serious bread for sure to secure the top trainer's business and I think it showed at the press conference. James looked good and sounded mature and ready to race.

Chad Reed showed up and basically said that he spent the summer partying and having a great time. He really did say that folks! He said that he doesn't have a trainer, is just doing what works for him and is in a happy place. Again, I think he sounded true to himself and the one quote that I remembered (besides the partying all summer) was when he said that maybe he will gamble out on the track a bit and finish fourth instead of playing it safe and getting second. That's what he needs to do in my opinion, nobody can hang it out like James and that's what you have to do to get by him. Pressure him into a mistake. When you watch James sprint in the opening laps there is just no way that a human being can ride like that for 20 laps – it's too much mentally, physically and spiritually draining. Reed needs to hang it out just like James to beat him, easier said than done for sure.

As I'm sure you're aware of, Reed captured the win at Anaheim. James Stewart fell in the first turn and came from practically dead last to second. I think both riders were impressive and for different reasons. Stewart was impressive for the fact that he didn't go all berserk and wad himself up a bunch of times. That's what the old Stewart probably would've done but he kept it steady and when he got behind Reed he really couldn't make up any time. He probably realized that you can't win the title in the first race but you can lose it. He did have a couple of close calls – like taking out two tuff blocks on the landing to the finish line – but, hey, baby steps right?

Reed won by getting the start and in the words of Tim Ferry "sprinting like hell" on the first lap and staying out of trouble. He had a mid-race stall but the bike quickly fired up. He kept his composure during that whole episode also. Reed showed that he had speed, he showed that he had heart as well. While passing for the lead in his heat race he went down pretty hard and remounted and came back to win. Here's the thing people – after a crash like that he could've just rolled around and qualified for the Main easily but he dug deep and gutted out the victory, probably knowing deep in his heart that the gate position would help him a little bit.

What about the rest of the guys? Langston does look like a new man and he was steady and fast. In the past GL has always had trouble stringing together 20 consistent laps. There's no doubt about his speed, just the concentration it takes to go that speed. Well, he taught me that he just might have the mental part down. Grant looked good and might win the 'best of the rest' battle.

Tim Ferry was his usual self. He got third and didn't even jump the second triple all night. How do you make the podium and not jump a triple? I don't know but Red Dog did it. His bike looked real good also, very fast and despite all the ruts he stayed pretty straight all night.

Andrew Short and Davi Millsaps probably wish they could have a do-over as they were not really factors in the race. The other Team Honda signee, Tedesco, really struggled with crashes all night. He got up in fifth after being lapped and stayed right with GL and Red Dog in their battle so maybe he has the speed? We'll see in Phoenix I suppose.

Makita/Rockstar Suzuki's David Vuillemin and Mike Alessi had mixed results as well. DV12 was just okay, I really thought he would do better in the muck. He's won so many supercrosses and mud races that when you combine the two he should have it made! He was not a player in this race. A little known fact about DV is that he is coming off of two pretty good off-season crashes that held him back from getting used to the bike and team. I think a more reasonable time frame to judge him will be in three to four races.



A summer on the couch seems to have done Chad the world of good

Alessi crashed a whole bunch but he showed some speed. He had to ride the LCQ and looked to be having trouble with privateer Antonio Balbi until Balbi 'balbied' off the track (Antonio crashes more often than my internet hook-up)! Anyways, I digress. Alessi will be bringing it this year because he will get good starts and he'll learn on the job. Look for better things from him.

So that's my take on the first race. I wish that DBR's deadline was one week later as I would like to see the guys on a dry track. It was a thrill of a night for sure and the long battle has just begun.





The baby X gets a double thumbs-up from Godfrey!

# LITTLE BELTER!

SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2004, HONDA'S CRF 250X HAS BEEN WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS THANKS TO ITS SWEET-HANDLING, SMOOTH-TORQUING, OFF-ROAD INSPIRED PERFORMANCE...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by still-mx.co.uk

The Honda CRF 250X is the subject of our analysis this month as this little bike is a bit of an unsung hero – not a world-beater by any means but a solid, multi-purpose bike and an excellent ride. We will take a look at the good and not-so-good points of the CRF as well as a few of the hop-up modifications which boost the performance of the mid-sized Honda off-roader.

The CRF 250X was launched in '04 and was an

immediate hit with buyers as it requires minimal input on the trails. It also offered – and, indeed, still offers – Honda fans an all-action alternative to the XR range to pound the trails on. Lawless was lucky enough to go to the Euro launch of the bike and he still talks of his prowess on the X in the mountains of Spain! Although the Guv is a bit of a trials legend (ask Peter Purvis) this does say heaps about the design and engineering behind the bike.

Honda set out to make a bike which rode easily and kept its friendly nature for full days in the saddle. This user-friendly characteristic can only be achieved with good chassis and motor development coming together on the drawing board to create smiling faces at the end of even the most difficult days.

Let's take a tour around the CRF X and see what time has taught us about the bike...

## THE GOOD

Honda are renowned for their quality in build and engineering. The X has the usual high quality of fixings. Each nut and bolt is of the highest quality and generally stays put from stock.

The plastics and bodywork fit so well it's ridiculous. The rad scoops for example take no thought at all as they line up and the fixings slot into their threads easily.

The front forks and rear shock are set up soft and user-friendly but the quality of the units give great bottoming resistance. The Showa forks are twin chamber which are great for trails and enduro as even when you get a leaking seal the effect on handling is minimal as the internal chamber is sealed and keeps the action under control. The rising rate through the link and shock keeps the bike steady and true in most situations, again making for a confidence inspiring ride.

Honda are king of the aluminium frame as they have been in production the longest in various states of tweek. The X runs the same frame as the motocross bike and this makes sure that both turning and stability are top notch. I have not heard of any frame breakages on the X models which is reassuring and the threaded fixing collars all around the frame have all stayed true on some of the '04 models which I still service for my customers.

Nissin brakes on a Honda rock... That's that!

The coolant header tank under the rear mudguard is a great touch for when the going gets tough. Extra coolant and cooler running make for a longer motor life.

The headlight follows true Japanese building. The light is set high and unlike some Euro bikes is actually pretty useable on a night ride. It has pretty decent power and would get you out of trouble. My buddy Rowan has had a CRF X for a couple of years and on any night rides I have had to use the light from his red machine to guide me through the woods when darkness ("I believe in a thing called love") falls! Quality...

Electric starting and battery life are second to none on the Honda. Of course the battery will only last so long on any of these types of bikes but the Honda packs a punch and takes a charge well. One of the CRF Xs I deal with has been running the same battery for three years. The Honda makes good charging while riding and the battery life can stay long if you use the kickstart to fire the bike to life from cold.

With the addition of the starter motor the engine gains a few pounds but the motor is neat and well finished. The split motor with separate engine and gearbox chambers makes for motor longevity and

cleaner oil to lube the separate sections. Specialist oils can be used on each side and this can make for an increase in power when high quality oil is used in the engine and specialist gearbox and clutch oil is used in this department.

Airbox sealing is important in a trail and enduro bike, as is being able to access the air filter. The X runs with a side door system and the sealing on the door works very well. With the battery and wires running across the top of the airbox the filter is accessed through the door without the need to remove the seat.

The strength and quality of the metals used in the little Honda's control levers is very high. It is pretty rare to see a Honda with a bent rear brake pedal or gear shifter. I find that the metal is so good that it has excellent straightening quality. The stuff can be rescued from even the most bent of states so you aren't stuck on the track or trail.

The bike is super-quiet in stock and modified trim. The note of the Honda motor is ear-friendly (do you mean it sounds nice? – SL), the standard Renthal bars are strong and comfortable and the kick stand is super strong. You can pick these bikes up second-hand for good money and if they haven't been modified too much you will have a great fun bike for your moolah.



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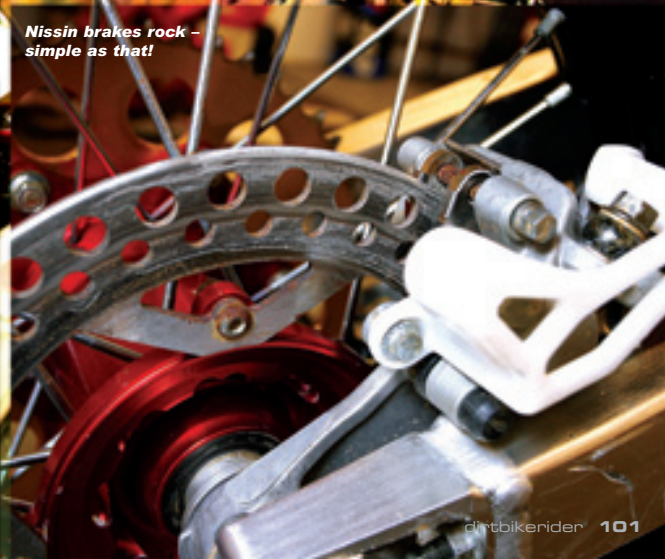
The coolant header tank stops the 250X from boiling over



Battery life is excellent – one of Walker's customers has had the same one for three years



The head light is great for all you night riders



Nissin brakes rock – simple as that!





Levers and pedals are very durable



Easy access air filter

## THE NOT-SO-GOOD

As with most four-strokes the carb takes in a lot of water during washing so it **MUST** be drained after each wash. The newer model CRF Xs have a rubber boot over the throttle cables where they enter the carb housing. This helps keep water out and helps with cable life. The older models take in a bit of water through the throttle cables and this water will find its way into the pump diaphragm and make trouble like a bored teenager!

Although the airbox side door is an excellent design, the filter and cage is a very tight squeeze to get out. This is okay but if the filter is very dirty some crud will fall into the airboot as you wrestle the filter and cage out of the airbox door.

The aluminium frame is excellent in design and geometry – the only small problem with ally is the fact that it can get a bit of 'white rust' if it's left damp or dirty for a while. Keep it clean with Scotchbrite and spray lube oil.

The CRF X rear wheels can suffer from a bit of falling apart syndrome. Basically, if you don't run these wheels in properly they will self-destruct. The wheels need to be run for 10 minutes then checked, followed by another 10 minutes and check. If the spokes are checked and settle into place they will stay good for a long time. If you only check them once they can fall to bits. They really should be more robust than this but it is a problem identified by a lot of owners. Do the checks several times during the first couple of days riding and all will be fine and dandy.

The tailpipe is quiet but also super-restrictive. The restrictors are heavy and even with them out the bike is not too noisy. And by losing weight off the rear of the bike the handling is improved further.

The inlet valves tend to take a dislike to 'revving Rodneys'. The inlets on the X will wear into the head a little if you are rev happy. Riders who aren't twisting it like a GP rider will easily get a couple of years out of their valves.

Standard Honda grips suck!



The Honda's wheels need careful checking when new to make sure the spokes stay good and tight







**An aftermarket exhaust is a good way to give the X extra oomph**

## PIMP MY X

There are some great closed course modifications for the X to get it ripping and if you are willing to spend a few quid you can turn the mild-mannered X into a bit more of an animal.

The exhaust system is one of the first mods. A good aftermarket pipe will start to let the bike breathe. The bike in the pics runs with an Akrapovic titanium system.

There is a Honda closed course mod info pack available. This is information which involves opening up the airbox, wiring mods and re-jetting. These are readily available from Honda dealers.

The modified bike also runs with a motocross cam. This increases power in all areas and allows the motor some extra rev.

Twin Air filters allow the X to breathe easier and the difference is noticeable over the heavy stock filter.

If you are planning to pimp an X then you should look at respringing the suspension to suit your weight and riding style. And remember, with any modification to this bike you will have to increase your maintenance schedule as higher revving and more power makes parts wear out quicker.

## WAKKER WECKONS!

### CTI MORPH KNEE BRACES

My CTI Morph knee braces have seen me through a lot of bike time in the last two years. They are looking pretty second-hand right now but that is how things should be when they are being tested – and tested properly.

These CTI beauties have taken hits from every angle and been bent, twisted and turned. My knees weren't intact when I started with them but they are no worse now after two of the busiest riding years of my life. They are comfortable and have been from the moment Darren fitted them at the Cardiff Supercross and I haven't turned a wheel without them since December '05. In over 300 hours of usage it was only my last trip to Las Vegas which proved a step too far for one of the strap buckles which broke when I caught it on a tree. These braces give a solid feeling of protection when fitted correctly and have never rubbed or irritated my skin in even the toughest days of Romaniacs which have lasted up to 16 hours for me.

These braces receive a 9.5 out of 10 on the Wakkometer for performance. Thanks to Darren and all the team at CTI UK.

### ALPINESTARS TECH 7s

These little beauties are a comfortable fit and feel very protective to the foot and ankle. They do not run with an inner boot but still give a good feeling of comfort to that area. The Tech 7 is quite a short boot but I really like its light feel and solid sole protection.

On the negative side I would say that the sole sits a little too high for the taller rider but that is a personal thing and some shorter riders will enjoy the platform sole style of the Tech 7. Buckles and soles are still in pretty good shape after 30 hours of use.

*The Alpinestars Tech 7s get 7 out of 10 for all-round performance.*



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Words by **DAN CLARK** Photos by **SUTTY**



*"Eee, I'm doing a reet grand wheelie me!"  
Clarky gets stuck into his testing duties on t'moors above Silsden*





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*For a 125 the Rev-3 packs a serious bottom-end punch*



*Dan rates the 200 as a perfect beginner's tool*



*Out of the full Rev-3 range it's the 250 that gets the Dan Clark thumbs-up*

**O**n a bitterly cold Wednesday morning the DBR team and my bad self headed to a secret test spot above the trials capital of t'world – that's Silsden, Yorkshire – to test the '08 Beta trials range. Like many of the other trials bike manufacturers' 2008 models, the new Betas don't look to have changed that much from the previous year apart from a few cosmetic bits and bobs – namely a new white rear mudguard and sexy black rims. So what have Beta been doing all year?

When you dig deeper into the specs of the new machines you soon realise that they have been working hard and tweaking what we already know is an incredibly well-made and beautiful bike to ride.

I started off on the 125cc bike which this year has had a whole heap of development work carried out to develop maximum power out of

that tiny engine. Mods include a new Keihin carb and crankcase and airbox tweaks – the same ones used on Jack Challoner's works bike on which he won the European and A Class British championships this year.

The 125 feels so light to move about on and the engine note sounds to have more power than the previous model – and it does. All the little changes add up to a totally new and improved Beta 125 which was pulling me everywhere in second gear. The Keihin carb kept the motor running clean throughout and it helped me feel like I could put all my confidence in this bike knowing that it wasn't going to bog or splutter at a bad time.

I feel that the 200 is aimed at the rider who wants a bike that isn't going to get out of control and it's perfect for the adult beginner. It has plenty of power if you have it on full song but the

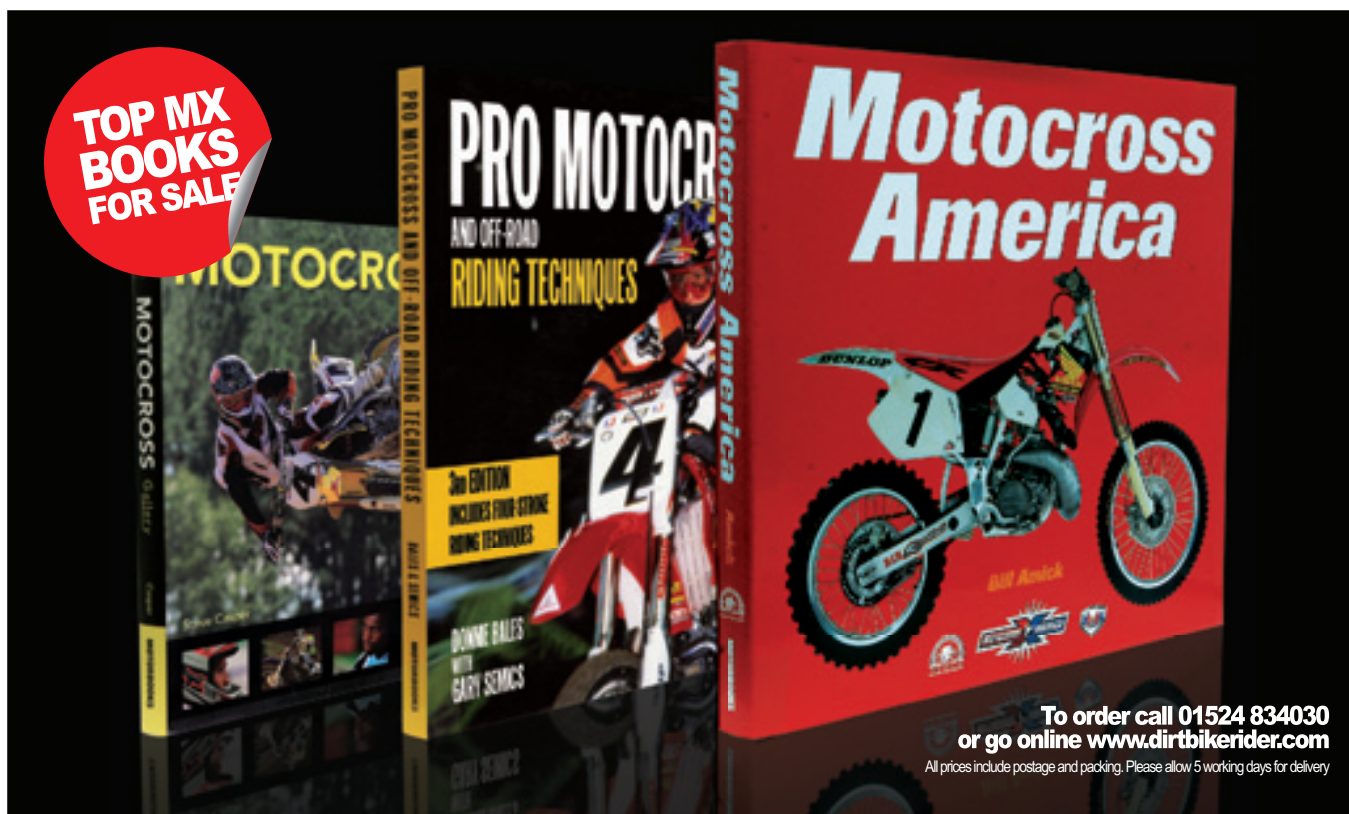
bottom-end is very soft and it's very easy to find grip. All the bikes – including this one – come fitted with a flywheel weight which helps soften the delivery of the power and these can be taken off if you want more snap. The 200 is a great bike and shows that Beta are providing bikes to suit all.

The 250cc is the best seller of the range and for me the one I prefer to ride. The bikes are looking fantastic this year and it is one of my favourite bikes because of the styling with the frame but also for the quality of the bike – every part is machined and crafted to perfection like a piece of art.

The bike has new Paioli fork settings for better rideability. The suspension absorbs big hits well and sits stable through rocky sections and helps you get plenty of grip too. This bike feels balanced and has been tested to death >>



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*The 270 is a serious weapon – and a dangerous one in the wrong hands*



*Dan reckons the Beta thumper is the best on the market*



*"By the time the front wheel's down you'll have my invoice!"*



## SPECIFICATIONS

### REV-3 125 >>

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Capacity:</b>         | 124cc                      |
| <b>Bore and stroke:</b>  | 54mm x 54mm                |
| <b>Front suspension:</b> | 38mm Paioli (165mm travel) |
| <b>Rear suspension:</b>  | Paioli (175mm travel)      |
| <b>Front brake:</b>      | 185mm disc                 |
| <b>Rear brake:</b>       | 165mm disc                 |
| <b>Carburettor:</b>      | Keihin PWK 28mm            |
| <b>Gearbox:</b>          | Six-speed                  |
| <b>Wheelbase:</b>        | 1310mm                     |
| <b>Seat height:</b>      | 660mm                      |
| <b>Dry weight:</b>       | 70kg                       |

### REV-3 200 >>

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Capacity:</b>         | 195cc                      |
| <b>Bore and stroke:</b>  | 64mm x 60.5mm              |
| <b>Front suspension:</b> | 38mm Paioli (165mm travel) |
| <b>Rear suspension:</b>  | Paioli (175mm travel)      |
| <b>Front brake:</b>      | 185mm disc                 |
| <b>Rear brake:</b>       | 165mm disc                 |
| <b>Carburettor:</b>      | Keihin PWK 28mm            |
| <b>Gearbox:</b>          | Six-speed                  |
| <b>Wheelbase:</b>        | 1310mm                     |
| <b>Seat height:</b>      | 660mm                      |
| <b>Dry weight:</b>       | 70kg                       |

### REV-3 250 >>

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Capacity:</b>         | 249.7cc                    |
| <b>Bore and stroke:</b>  | 72.5mm x 60.5mm            |
| <b>Front suspension:</b> | 38mm Paioli (165mm travel) |
| <b>Rear suspension:</b>  | Paioli (175mm travel)      |
| <b>Front brake:</b>      | 185mm disc                 |
| <b>Rear brake:</b>       | 165mm disc                 |
| <b>Carburettor:</b>      | Keihin PWK 28mm            |
| <b>Gearbox:</b>          | Six-speed                  |
| <b>Wheelbase:</b>        | 1310mm                     |
| <b>Seat height:</b>      | 660mm                      |
| <b>Dry weight:</b>       | 71kg                       |

### REV-3 270 >>

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Capacity:</b>         | 274.5cc                    |
| <b>Bore and stroke:</b>  | 76mm x 60.5mm              |
| <b>Front suspension:</b> | 38mm Paioli (165mm travel) |
| <b>Rear suspension:</b>  | Paioli (175mm travel)      |
| <b>Front brake:</b>      | 185mm disc                 |
| <b>Rear brake:</b>       | 165mm disc                 |
| <b>Carburettor:</b>      | Keihin PWK 28mm            |
| <b>Gearbox:</b>          | Six-speed                  |
| <b>Wheelbase:</b>        | 1310mm                     |
| <b>Seat height:</b>      | 660mm                      |
| <b>Dry weight:</b>       | 71kg                       |

### REV-4 250 >>

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Capacity:</b>         | 249.6cc                    |
| <b>Bore and stroke:</b>  | 77mm x 53.6mm              |
| <b>Front suspension:</b> | 38mm Paioli (165mm travel) |
| <b>Rear suspension:</b>  | Paioli (175mm travel)      |
| <b>Front brake:</b>      | 185mm disc                 |
| <b>Rear brake:</b>       | 165mm disc                 |
| <b>Carburettor:</b>      | Mikuni SEBSR 33-79         |
| <b>Gearbox:</b>          | Five-speed                 |
| <b>Wheelbase:</b>        | 1319mm                     |
| <b>Seat height:</b>      | 680mm                      |
| <b>Dry weight:</b>       | 75kg                       |

to get this right. The engine performance has stepped up a level again this year with the small changes making the engine run so smooth and clean right through the range. The motor feels more responsive but retains a smooth delivery and is suited for riders of all abilities in my opinion.

Moving on to the big daddy of the Beta range. The 270 has always had huge amounts of power for the expert or bigger-boned rider. This year the changes include mods on the cylinderhead and a new single cylinder chamber silencer which gives the bike a smoother delivery at low engine speed but also increases power and acceleration at the top-end.

In the wrong hands this bike could quite

easily do more harm than good but a confident rider can take it anywhere.

I really like the 270 this year – especially the styling – as the cowboy bars feel nice and it's easy to feel at one with the Betas as they have nice low footpegs which make the bike feel easy to balance and light.

The 250cc four-stroke Rev-4 is a bike that was brand-new last year. It was clear back then that Beta had got it right and this year's bike is no different – it's light and doesn't sound like a motocrosser! With four-strokes there's a bit of an art to starting them and once I'd figured out the Rev-4 needs just the tiniest amount of throttle the bike started first time every time.

New for this year is a hot-start lever on the

carb – if you fall off or stall the motor simply pull this lever and it makes it easier to start so you won't be clogging up the section.

This bike – like the others in the Beta range – has had major changes and for me the four-stroke is the best in its class. When you're riding you don't feel that huge engine-braking effect that you feel on other four-strokes and you can actually ride it like a two-stroke on the bottom-end which helps make you feel confident enough to flick it about.

The power delivery is smooth and pretty progressive, ideally suited for clubmen riders – although I hear there may well be a 300 Rev-4 coming soon which should suit expert and pro-standard riders better.



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JOSH SPINKS GETS HIS PAWS ON  
EX-TOMMY SEARLE RACE RACKET

## MOTOAGOO-GOO!

RAGE CALLS IN AT THE UK'S PREMIER YOUTH WINTER SERIES

## GIRLS!GIRLS!GIRLS!

FOXHOLES PHOTO SPECIAL





**Jamie Houghton**



**Josh Waterman  
and Charlie Evans**



**Anthony Smith**



**An angel**



**Ben Howell**



**An Santa Claus**



**Nathan Rooks and Matt Mofatt**

# MOTOAGOO-GOO!

**RAGE CHECKS OUT SOME OF THE ACTION FROM BRITAIN'S BIGGEST AND BEST YOUTH WINTER SERIES**

**A**fter 17 seasons of organising races, Tom Arnold knows a thing or two about putting on winter motocross events either at his spiritual home of Wilden Lane near Kidderminster, Polesworth or on Barmouth Beach. Tom puts on a great meeting, he runs in all weathers and gets you away early in the

depths of winter and there's never ever a problem with admin. What more could you want on a cold, frosty December Sunday?

Ask anyone in the paddock and Tom's the top gun in winter. Currently the format consists of a winter championship from October to Christmas and the highly acclaimed Moto Goo series from

January to March. The Moto Goo series has become in the last few seasons the perfect tool for a lot of the top flight youth guys to hone their skills and have a good look at some of the opposition just prior to the nationals kicking off and the result is youth racing quite often on a par with the nationals themselves.



# HIREDGUN!

REDLINE KTM'S JOSH SPINKS SCORES SOME EX-SEARLE FACTORY FIREPOWER

Coming off the back of a great Big Wheel season, Josh Spinks opted to run a 125cc in the early rounds of the Wilden winter series to great effect with some blistering performances to get the better of Connor Walkley and Jack Rowland among others after some memorable racing.

For the '08 season Josh flirted with the idea of running a 144 but once he had thrown a leg over the 250F KTM the decision became obvious and the result looks impressive to say the least.

Josh – with the backing of KTM UK and the Redline KTM dealership – has secured a mouth watering ride in the shape of a genuine

ex-Tommy Searle pukka full-spec GP machine. Just before Christmas Josh took it out for a spin at Wilden Lane and put on a barnstorming display. The machine was still sporting Tommy Searle's #101 plates as it was straight out of the factory KTM garage and it seems to fit like a glove – safe to say this looks like a class act combo for '08.

Just looking at the already declared runners and riders for the Elite Youth Cup, you can add Josh's name to the list of potential winners in what's sure to be an epic tussle for Open class honours and maybe the toughest title to win in Josh's last season in youth motocross.



# LOVESHACK!

JUMPIN' JOSH WILDE SIGNS UP WITH YORKSHIRE MOTO-SHOP MOTO SHACK

Moto Shack's Jammin' Jim Scafton can sure spot some up-and-coming talent when he sees it which is why the British MX2 championship runner has hooked up young Yorkshire lad Josh Wilde for the '08 season with some gratefully received support. Although Josh has only been racing for a couple of seasons the 12-year-old Suzuki rider – who's already an AMCA inter club champion – is looking to take on the top national talent at a round or two of the Elite Youth Cup super series this summer. Good luck Josh!

Josh n' Jim – ready for action



# MAX!

ANSTIE JNR GOES TO EXTREME LENGTHS IN ORDER TO TAKE A CHRISTMAS BREAK

After getting back from the Mini Os it was rest time. My next big race is in March so we were just doing our homework for the up and coming races. I had an unfortunate crash on the KTM test track which ended up with me out of action for the next month with a broken shoulder blade. So it gave me time to get everything set-up with moving into our house in the US and getting my school work sorted. My school have been really supportive and allowed me to sit on the other side of the pond emailing them the work although I do have to go back for some exams in May.

After about two weeks with a personal arm rest on I threw it in the bin and began training again. We were getting up at 4am to make the early morning spin class at LA Fitness then doing some swimming before heading over to KTM in Temecula to go and see fellow Englishman Kurt Nicoll (not, as the Americans spell it, Nicole) the manager and Leighton Rice the engine development guy from Wales.

Leighton used to be my dad's mechanic and whenever we are driving to our track in England dad always tells me the story of when Leighton was driving on the motorway with my dad's big trailer and he got a major tank-slapper on and planted himself straight into the hedge. But when you talk to Leighton there is a different story – "you were driving too slow Leighton, you've got to go at 50mph" said my dad. So when he got into the tank-slapper Leighton remembered my dad's words and said to himself "I've got to go 50mph" because he knew what would happen if he went below 50 when he saw my dad again!

All the guys at KTM have been really helpful, especially my personal babysitter Devin – she's really cool. As I said all the guys are really great at KTM and I can't ask for anything more. From the suspension guys to Coop the truck driver, everything is amazing.

Now we are sat at home waiting for the arrival of fellow Europeans who are coming over to train at the Anstie Racing Facility to ride and live like a pro. If you want any info on the Anstie Racing Facility just log onto [www.anstieracing.com](http://www.anstieracing.com) and it has all the details.

Hope you all had a Great Christmas!







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# GIRLS!GIRLS!GIRLS!

FANDABIDOZI FEISTY FEMALES FOTO FUNNANIGANS  
(GIRL'S NATIONAL PHOTO SPECIAL)

Photos by actionsport.co.uk

If you missed out on all the action at last summer's Girl's Nationals at Foxholes here a spectacular reminder from hot-shot snapper Ray Smith...



Kerry Wilson



Dani Hipgrave



Karen Arnardottir



Nicole Kane

# WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!WIN!

SOME SWEET CUSTOM GRAPHICS FROM GRAF-FIX.CO.UK

It's almost time for the new season to kick off and so there's no better time to give your bike a funky fresh makeover with some cool custom graphics designed to your very own specification. There are plenty of great custom graphics manufacturers in the UK – one of them being [www.graf-fix.co.uk](http://www.graf-fix.co.uk) who are based in Hyde alongside Mancunian motocross legends One-11 MX.

To celebrate One-11 MX and Graf-fix's status as dirt biking legends we've hooked up with the legendary lemonade-loving lotharios to offer you the chance to win a set of custom graphics for your very own dirt scooter that'll cost

you absolutely nowt, nothing, zilch, they're complimentary, gratis etc etc.

All you've got to do to win is draw an exquisite sketch of what you'd like your graphics to look like on a plain piece of A4 paper – don't worry too much about getting the shape exactly right as they'll be reworked to fit your bike if you win. Don't forget to write your name, address, age and the bike you'd like the graphics for on the back of your drawing or else you won't win, no matter how chuffing great your picture is.

When you're all done and dusted stuff your piece of A4 artwork into a suitable sized

envelope then send it to us at 'Graf-fix comp', DBR Magazine, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 4AG. Our favourite design received before February 15 will win the custom graphics. Lovely!





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# IT'S BILLY BOU!

**IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY YOU'RE SURE OF A BIG SURPRISE - BILLY MAC RIDING TRIALS ON A GAS GAS!**

**HERE'S THE** deal everyone – go buy yourself a trials bike! That's right, a trials bike! Oh and do it now will you? Good stuff!

British weather in the winter months is pish and the only way to properly enjoy riding a motorcycle is if it has no seat and has Gas Gas on the side! I recently purchased a Gas Gas from the very likeable fellow John Shirt who gave me a sweet deal along with a few trials tips – cheers Shirty!

My last trials efforts were at the Moto 1 race a few years ago and it was a disaster, I was the worst by far. But after speaking with Everts last year he told me how important it is and since I'm trying my best to imitate his style of riding I thought it was the next essential step. Shirty had the Gasser arrive just before Christmas too so it made my Chrimbo even better.

Every day me and Bry go running round our village. The last section is through the woods by my house and each time I always check out the places for riding. We have cliffs, burns, trees, rocks...the lot. It's trials heaven! We have so many kids who bomb around up the local field that I thought what harm will a trials bike do? It's slow, quiet and doesn't rip anything up. So the day it arrived I chucked some two-stroke fuel in the tank and literally rode from my house to the woods.

It's nice to have the luxury of being able to ride somewhere close and just for fun. I could get the bike out the garage every day if I wanted, crack on down the woods and improve my balance and throttle control. It beats loading up the van and travelling miles to a practice track – especially in this weather. Numb fingers, minging bike, messing up your new gear. No thanks! That's why everyone heads to Spain during the winter. So get yourself a Gasser and start having some fun! It beats a minibike any day and you don't get in as much trouble off the locals.

Chrimbo was good. Santa brought me a video camera this time although I did again ask for Lego Technic! The big yellow bulldozer I wanted but, hey, I think the elves hadn't made enough and seeing as I'm 23 they thought my fun could be spared for the younger 'uns who wanted Lego.

On the 29th me, my bro and Bryan headed to France for a week's skiing over the New Year. We booked up in Avoriaz and it turned out to be the best holiday ever! We were proper goons all week, bombing down the slopes seeing who could pull the biggest jumps and tuck our legs the highest! We were hacking about good and proper! Stevie has even earned the new nickname 'Ryno' cos every single thing he would 'ryno it up', just charging at the jumps and going down big almost every time! It was the funniest thing you ever will see! And what made the holiday even better was that Easty was at the town just below us and we were skiing on the same slopes so every day we would meet up and have a blast.

I now have a new appreciation for the bing bashers because even though we were completely sh\*t on our skis we had the best time ever. Our

jumps were poor – literally jumping only a few metres – but we had the best time, probably like the boys do up the bings. Go on lads! There were also about 40 motocrossers from Essex out there who recognised me in the airport! It was so embarrassing and Bry and Stevie took the pish for a few days about that one! But they were proper good banter and I need to give them a shout out! Lenny the stuntman and his kids, Louis, his mum and dad and the other dudes that knew Easty! I'll make a point of remembering everyone's names next year!

We met them in the bar now known as 'Cheryl's Bar'. It is actually called the Wild Horse but there was a chick in there called Cheryl who, well, I fell in love with! So Cheryl's Bar was the meeting point after the slope bashing activities. The first night we were in we got the banter flowing with the motocross group. There was a kid called Louis – a bit of a London rude boy – who we immediately took a liking to and had some excellent banter. He ended up staying in our room for a few nights and came skiing with us all – he was really sound and kept putting in good words for me with Cheryl! Cheers son!

New Year's Eve was a bit of a disappointment for me though. I caught a cold for a few days so I couldn't manage a drink that night but a couple of days later we all made up for it! Cheryl's Bar again and we had a dessert with vodka in. Now we didn't intend on getting drunk but they brought me and Easty basically one scoop of lemon sorbet in a glass filled with vodka! It was lush so we had two each! After them we were a bit merry and started the karaoke up! Me and Easty were laying down some howling lyrical content to Kings of Leon and the Red Hot Chili Peppers but everyone loved us, even Cheryl! Oh yeah!

Shots quickly followed and Cheryl joined us. We danced and sung into the night until the bar closed and I even had the broom and mop out helping her clean up – what a nice boy I am, eh? And my efforts paid off, turns out she likes me! Louis's mum told me she defo liked me but I only found this out when I got home and she had emailed me! What a nightmare, eh? Still, I was pumped and I'm gonna try get her to a race next year – if only Japan was still on the world championship calendar!

I lost loads of weight while we were away – skiing all day long is a fat burning mission and the black runs are killer on your legs so it was totally worth it. Since I've been home though training has hit a new level. The next couple of months are gonna be hardcore and today was the first taster with a 75-minute run with interval sessions, then the gym for a weights session. And I've got loads of riding planned with a week in Belgium then three weeks in Florida. It's about to get really busy!

Normally I would have all the Honda pics in this issue for you guys but the team is still finalising some big sponsors and until we get graphics and stuff then the team don't want any official pics out but I have a few sneaky ones of me practising on my myspace site so go check it out and leave me a message at [www.myspace.com/billymac211](http://www.myspace.com/billymac211)

*Billy Mac 211*





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